

We did it ourselves

An Evaluation
Guide Book



Written by:
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Chapter 11. Evaluation Work Plan: Pulling It All Together

The planning for your evaluation so far has encompassed:

- Statements of how you want children and families to be in your community (child and family outcomes).
- How you will know that you have achieved these outcomes (indicators).
- Information on where your community is now with regard to these outcomes (baseline data).
- The logic connecting your strategies to outcomes (assumptions).
- The questions you will ask and answer during implementation (evaluation questions).
- The methods you will use to answer the questions.
- The respondents you will contact.

Now it is time to assemble all of your evaluation planning efforts into one document. This chapter will describe the *evaluation work plan* and its components.

Why is an evaluation work plan important?

The *evaluation work plan* brings all the pieces of your evaluation design together and adds specific details about timelines and tasks. Think of the evaluation work plan as a map, a blueprint, or a recipe. Anyone should be able to read the plan and carry out the work. The evaluation work plan is a management tool, as well. It allows the coordinator and other collaborative members to oversee the evaluation.

What are the components of an evaluation work plan?

The evaluation design and work plan should contain the following 11 components:

1. The child and/or family—and, if you have them, community—*outcomes*. (See Chapter 2 of this Evaluation Guide for more information.)
2. The corresponding *indicators* for each outcome. The indicators should also include how the data will be measured and from whom the data will be obtained. (See Chapter 3.)
3. *Baseline data* for each indicator. Baseline data are important because they tell you where your community stands with regard to your outcomes before you start to implement your strategies. (See Chapter 3.)

4. *Assumptions* that connect the strategy to the child or family outcome(s) for the strategy or strategies you will be evaluating in depth. Remember: the assumptions become your short-term outcomes. (See Chapter 4.)
5. *Evaluation questions*. You should have a set of implementation evaluation questions for every strategy you plan to implement, short-term evaluation questions to measure the assumptions for at least one strategy, and long-term evaluation questions for each child and family outcome. (See Chapter 5.)

Remember:

- Answering *implementation evaluation questions* allows you to document your activities and provide information to help duplicate the strategy more effectively and efficiently.
 - Answering *short-term evaluation questions* allows you to confirm your assumptions, celebrate successes, and modify your approaches, if necessary.
 - Answering *long-term evaluation questions* allows you to track changes in the child or family outcomes, and celebrate success over the long term or reevaluate the effectiveness of your chosen strategy for a particular outcome, if necessary.
6. *Evaluation methods* to answer each of the evaluation questions. Methods are the tools or techniques that will provide the information to answer your evaluation questions. (Evaluation methods are discussed in detail in Chapters 8 and 9.)
- All of the above components have already been completed; you will just need to assemble them for your evaluation work plan. The following are new components that you will need to develop:
7. *Tasks* that describe the steps you will take to carry out the evaluation methods (described in this chapter).
 8. Assignment of *responsibility* for each task (described in this chapter).
 9. A *timeline* that describes when each task will be completed (described in this chapter).
 10. An overall evaluation timeline that incorporates other important dates for your project (described in this chapter).

11. An *appendix* with any forms or surveys you plan to use. Included in this appendix could be documentation forms, written surveys, questions for interviews, etc.

What format should we use for our evaluation work plan?

There is no standard format. However, we have developed recommended formats that you can use for presenting the components of the evaluation work plan.

Sample formats for presenting your outcomes, indicators, baseline data, and assumptions are included in Exhibit 11-1 at the end of the chapter. Worksheet 9 presents several blank tables that you can use to present the remaining components of the evaluation work plan. You will also find a completed example using the same table layout in Exhibit 11-2.¹

Evaluation Plan components 5 and 6 (evaluation questions and methods) are presented in **Table A: Evaluation Questions and Methods** (Exhibit 11-2). The column headings in Table A are:

1. **Evaluation Questions** (implementation, short-term outcome, or long-term outcome questions). Here you will list your evaluation questions. In Table A-1, you will list your implementation evaluation questions for a particular strategy. In Table A-2, you will list your short-term outcome questions for a particular strategy. You will need as many sets of Table A-1 and A-2 as you have strategies being implemented. In Table A-3, you will list the long-term outcome questions.
2. **Method(s)**. Methods refer to the tools or techniques you will use to answer your evaluation questions. **Important: Each evaluation question must have at least one method.** However, the same method can be used to address more than one evaluation question. For example, a community survey could supply the data to answer several of your evaluation questions. Be as specific as possible in describing your method—if you are using an existing questionnaire, provide the name and how it will be distributed. Don't just write "community survey"—instead, write

¹ We have developed several different completed examples for this chapter, which are included in the exhibits. Be forewarned that the examples were not developed with one strategy or one collaborative in mind. Don't try to read across different examples as if they were all part of one evaluation plan. The examples were developed to reflect different concerns and approaches.

"community survey to be distributed at the Health Fair."

3. **Respondents/Data Sources.** Respondents are the persons or sources that will supply the data to answer the question. If you are using administrative data, you won't have respondents. In that case, write the data source, for example, "School Attendance Records." See Chapter 10 to learn how to identify your respondents. **Important: Every evaluation question must have at least one respondent or data source.**
4. **Timing.** Timing refers to when and how often the method is to be carried out, for example, "annually in June," "twice a year in May and November," "at the completion of each dental education program."
5. **Items.** Items are the specific items or questions that will be part of your survey, interview, focus groups, or documentation form. For example, if the evaluation question is about satisfaction, the "item" column would include the actual survey question or questions that will assess satisfaction. If the evaluation question is "When did the dental screenings take place?", the word "dates" should appear in the item column. Items are not your evaluation questions.

Components 7 through 9 (tasks, responsibility, and timeline) are covered in **Table B: Tasks and Timelines** (Exhibit 11-2). Table B is to be used for listing the tasks and timelines associated with each evaluation method. If you have identified three methods you will use to obtain data, then you complete this table three times, once for each method. If you plan to conduct two separate surveys with different questions, each survey should be thought of as a separate method and would be listed on a separate Table B.

The columns on Table B: Tasks and Timelines are:

1. **Tasks.** An evaluation "task" is an action step. The tasks state specifically what has to be completed in order to execute the evaluation method, collect the necessary data, or answer the evaluation question. Examples of tasks include:
 - Design survey,
 - Pilot test survey,
 - Revise survey,
 - Distribute survey,
 - Analyze results, etc.

All major tasks related to the method should be shown.

2. **Person(s) Responsible.** Because the evaluation work plan is to be used as a management tool, it is important to indicate the assignment of responsibility for each task. Who has volunteered or is taking ownership to complete the specific tasks? Provide their names and, if applicable, position titles.
3. **Timeline.** This is the date when the task will be undertaken. If it is a task that will be done repeatedly, such as conducting a kindergarten assessment of entering kindergartners, you could write “annually in September.”
4. **Date Completed.** This column should be left blank in your evaluation work plan but should be filled in later as tasks are completed to help you keep track of what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done. A copy of this page could be submitted on a regular basis to a funder or other organization that monitors the progress of your collaborative to demonstrate that you are on top of your evaluation.

The next component of the evaluation work plan, component 10, is an **overall timeline** that organizes all the tasks by due date. The overall timeline is a list in date or chronological order of all the major tasks related to evaluation, including when a report is due to a funder or other outside organization. Also, include the dates of major planned events or activities.

The reason for doing an overall timeline is to help you be realistic in your time estimates. The overall timeline will allow you see the “big picture.” It can help you to check such things as:

- Will the evaluation data be analyzed by the time our annual or final report is due?
- Are there too many evaluation activities scheduled for the same time with the same person or persons responsible?

Your answers to these questions may cause you to rethink your timeline.

An example of an overall timeline is included at the end of the chapter (Exhibit 11-3).

Lastly, the **Appendix** to the evaluation plan (component 11) should include instruments for any data that are being collected now or will be collected soon after the evaluation plan is submitted. These include event documentation forms, sign-in sheets, written surveys, interview protocols, etc.

A checklist of all the components in the evaluation work plan is included at the end of this

chapter for you to use in making sure your work plan is complete (Worksheet 10).

How many years should the evaluation work plan encompass?

The evaluation work plan should encompass several years if your strategic plan covers several years, with more detail provided about the first year. Evaluation plans for subsequent years may be revised later on the basis of what was learned in the first year (see discussion below on changing the evaluation plan).

Can we start implementing strategies and activities before our evaluation work plan is completed?

By all means, yes. **Just be sure to start documenting as soon as you start implementing anything.** It is essential that you document strategies and activities as they are put into place. You will lose valuable information for your collaborative and your community if you let activities pass without documenting that they happened.

What if we do not have baseline data collected for all of our indicators when assembling an evaluation work plan?

Think seriously about how and when you will collect this information. Because baseline refers to collecting information *before* implementation, it is not as sensible to measure something after strategies have already begun. The point is to track change from before you implemented a strategy until it has been completed, to learn what works and what does not work. You may want to consider dropping an indicator if you cannot collect baseline data and/or consider identifying an alternative. In other words, if you do not have baseline data—collect it **now**. If you are having a problem collecting baseline data, consult your funder for advice or seek help from people in your community who work with data or are familiar with what data exist in your community, such as the local sheriff, a nonprofit agency director, or a county services, hospital, or school administrator.

Can the evaluation work plan be changed after it is written?

Yes! There are several reasons you might need to revise your evaluation work plan. First, remember that evaluation is valuable primarily because it allows you to collect information to improve the way you do things. Evaluating your progress increases your likelihood of success. If you learn through your evaluation or in other ways

that you need to revise your strategic action plan, you will need to revise your evaluation plan as well. Second, you may find the evaluation work plan is not giving you the information you need. If this is the case, just as a blueprint can be adjusted and a recipe can be modified, the evaluation design can (and should) be adjusted and updated periodically. You will need to revise only the tables or sections that need to be modified on the basis of changes in your strategic action plan or timeline.

What should we do with our evaluation work plan?

The plan should be used to direct and monitor the evaluation. If you are reporting to a funding agent, you will probably want (or may be required) to submit your evaluation work plan to your funder.



Exhibit 11-1 Example of Formats for Components 1 through 3 of the Evaluation Work Plan

Issues: Dental Health
School Success

Child Outcomes	Indicators	Data
<p>1. Children will have healthy teeth.</p> <p>2. Children will be safe.</p> <p>3. Children will be successful in school.</p>	<p>1a. Increase the number of 2nd graders who are screened by a dentist at Central Elementary.</p> <p>1b. Increase % of 2nd graders receiving dental screening that receive follow-up treatment.</p> <p>2a. Increase in perception of community that children are safe, from question #12 of the Community Survey done in March 1997.</p> <p>2b. Decrease in injuries reported by school nurse at Central Elementary.</p> <p>2c. Decrease in # of incidents of violent crime in the city, as reported by the City Police Dept.</p> <p>3a. Decrease in # of children who are not accepted at Central Elementary because they are found to be not ready for kindergarten educationally or emotionally.</p> <p>3b. Increase in % of students scoring above average on standardized tests for 1-3 grades according to school district data.</p>	<p>1a. 1998 - 32 2nd graders were screened. 67% (32 out of 48) of 2nd graders received a referral to see a dentist. 15% of children (7 out of 48) had emergency problems (Source: Central Dental Initiative).</p> <p>1b. 1998 - 31% of 2nd graders referred to an outside dentist received treatment. (Central Dental Initiative)</p> <p>2a. March 1997 - 54% of respondents (N=342) felt that their children were safe in their community. (Community Survey)</p> <p>2b. 1996-97 school year - 76 injuries reported by school nurse. (Central Elementary)</p> <p>2c. 1995 - 2,807 violent crimes reported. (City Police Dept.) 1996 - 2,669 violent crimes reported. (City Police Dept.)</p> <p>3a. 1997 - 10 children deemed not ready for kindergarten. (Central Elementary)</p> <p>3b. 1996 - 1st graders: 10% scored above average; 2nd graders: 15% scored above average; 3rd graders: 18% scored above average. (Central Elementary District)</p>
Family Outcomes		
<p>1. Parent/families will be more involved with their children's education.</p> <p>2. Parents/families will be more involved in the community activities.</p>	<p>1a. Increase in # of parents/volunteers in their children's classrooms at Central Elementary.</p> <p>1b. Increase in # of parents involved with PTA at Central Elementary School.</p> <p>2a. Increase in # of parents/volunteers attending community events sponsored by the collaborative.</p>	<p>1a. 1996-97 school year - Average of 2 parents/volunteers per day. (Central Elementary District)</p> <p>1b. 1996 - 34 parents. (Central Elementary District)</p> <p>1997 - 45 parents. (Central Elementary District)</p> <p>2b. 1998 - 50 volunteers participated in the Agricultural Fair; 150 volunteers participated in the Stand for Children; and 75 volunteers participated in the Health and Safety Fair. (Collaborative records).</p>

Source: Central Collaborative Evaluation Work Plan, December 1998.

Exhibit 11-1 (Continued) Example of a Format for Component 4 of the Evaluation Work Plan

STRATEGY:	Enhanced learning resources for families.				
Activities:	Promote library services, Develop mentor programs, Establish literacy and reading programs, Create community gardens.				
Assumptions:	promote library service	people will use library services	libraries perceived as a resource	families will use child activities	parents will read with children
	develop mentor programs	tutors and children will participate			children will be successful in school, ready for school
	establish literacy and reading programs	parents will participate		parents will increase reading skills	children will be successful in school, ready for school
	create community gardens	families will participate			parents will be involved with their children

Worksheet 9
Table A-1
Evaluation Questions and Methods

Strategy:

Activity:

Implementation Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items

Worksheet 9 (continued)
Table A-2
Evaluation Questions and Methods

Strategy:

Activity:

Short-Term Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items

Worksheet 9 (continued)
Table A-3
Evaluation Questions and Methods

Long-Term Evaluation Questions^a	Indicator(s)	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Baseline

^a These are the questions about your child and family outcomes.

Worksheet 9 (completed)
Table B
Tasks and Timelines

Evaluation Method:
 Relates to Strategy(ies):
 Relates to Child or Family Outcome(s):
 Respondents or Data Source:

Tasks	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Date Completed

Exhibit 11-2
Completed Example of Table A-1
Implementation Evaluation Questions and Methods

Strategy: Provide conflict management training for parents.
Activity: Parent to Parent Mentoring Program
Target: All parents

Implementation Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items
1. Was Parent to Parent Mentoring established? <input type="checkbox"/> When was training held? <input type="checkbox"/> Where was it located? <input type="checkbox"/> Who was trained as a mentor? <input type="checkbox"/> Who trained the mentors?	Documentation	Program coordinators in 3 sites	At the conclusion of each training session	For each site: <input type="checkbox"/> Date of training <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic area served <input type="checkbox"/> Name of mentor <input type="checkbox"/> Gender of mentor <input type="checkbox"/> Age of mentor's children <input type="checkbox"/> Name of trainer

EXHIBIT 11-2 (continued)
Completed Example of Table A-2
Short-Term Evaluation Questions and Methods

Strategy: Provide conflict management training for parents.
Activity: Parent to Parent Mentoring Program
Target: All parents

Short-Term Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items
1. Were families with children 0-8 aware of the program?	Survey of families distributed through the schools.	Families with children 0-8	Annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have you heard of Parent to Parent mentoring? ■ How did you hear about it?
2. Were agencies aware of the program?	Telephone interview with agency representatives.	Agencies	Annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have you heard of Parent to Parent mentoring? ■ How did you hear about it?
3. Did agencies refer families to the program?	Telephone interview with agency representatives.	Agencies	Annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How many families did you refer to the program? ■ If you did not refer families, why didn't you? ■ What would have to happen to increase your agency's referral to the program?

**Exhibit 11-2 (continued)
Completed Example of Table A-2 (continued)
Short-Term Evaluation Questions and Methods**

Strategy: Provide conflict management training for parents.
Activity: Parent to Parent Mentoring Program
Target: All parents

Short-Term Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items
4. Did families participate? Which families?	Documentation (information will be taken from participant intake form) Documentation (from intake form)	Program coordinators Program coordinators	Intake ongoing, program coordinator compiles annually in January. Annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Names of referring agencies ■ Participant characteristics: Number of children Single-parent status Highest grade completed Home community
5. Were families satisfied with the program?	Written Training Completion Survey: Satisfaction items. Post-training survey in person and follow-up survey mailed.	Program coordinators	At the end of the training period, and 4 month follow-up. Compiled annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you feel the program was worthwhile? ■ Do you think you can manage conflict better as a result of the program? ■ Is there anything that would improve the program?

**Exhibit 11-2 (continued)
Completed Example of Table A-2 (concluded)
Short-Term Evaluation Questions and Methods**

Strategy: Provide conflict management training for parents.
Activity: Parent to Parent Mentoring Program
Target: All parents

Short-Term Evaluation Questions	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Items
6. Did those participating learn appropriate skills to manage conflict?	Written Training Completion Survey: Conflict resolution skills and knowledge items. Post-training survey in person and follow-up survey mailed.	Program coordinators	At the end of the training period, and 4 month follow-up. Compiled annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Items will come from the test that goes with the curriculum
7. Were the skills used to manage conflict?	Written Training Completion Survey: Behavior change items. Post-training survey in person and follow-up survey mailed.	Program coordinators	At the end of the training period, and 4 month follow-up. Compiled annually in January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How frequently have you been able to use the conflict management skills you learned? ■ What were the results when you used your conflict management skills? ■ What were the situations in which you were able to use your conflict management skills?

**Exhibit 11-2 (continued)
Completed Example of Table A-3
Long-Term Evaluation Questions and Methods**

Long-Term Evaluation Questions	Indicator(s)	Method(s)	Respondents/ Data Sources	Timing	Baseline
<p>1. Were children safe in their homes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ # of domestic violence-related calls for assistance ■ # of domestic violence-related calls for assistance ■ # of confirmed reports of child abuse ■ Estimated number of families in domestic violence situations 	<p>Existing data</p> <p>Existing data</p> <p>Existing data from Child Protective Services</p> <p>Existing data</p>	<p>Police records</p> <p>Sheriff records</p> <p>CPS records</p> <p>Domestic Violence Coalition records</p>	<p>Annually in May</p> <p>Annually in May</p> <p>Annually in May</p> <p>Annually in May</p>	
<p>2. Were families socially supported?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ # families supported by community ■ # families using family support services ■ # and type of services used 	<p>Community Survey</p>	<p>Sample of community members</p>	<p>Annually in November</p>	

Exhibit 11-2 (completed) Completed Example of Table B Tasks and Timelines

Evaluation Method: Survey of participants to measure satisfaction
Relates to Strategy(ies): Conflict management training for parents
Relates to Child or Family Outcome(s): Children will be safe in their homes
Respondents or Data Source: Program participant

Tasks	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Date Completed
1. Design survey	Sally Jones with SRI	By September 1997	
2. Pilot test survey	Sally Jones	At end of first training	
3. Refine survey	Sally Jones and John Wright	Within 2 weeks	
4. Administer survey	Program Coordinators	At end of each training, and 4 month follow-ups	
5. Compile data	Sally Jones	On going	
6. Analyze data	Sally Jones with help from consultant	December 1997 and every 4 months thereafter	
7. Report results	Sally Jones and John Wright	May 1998 (Annual Report)	

Exhibit 11-3 Overall Timeline Example

March 21, 1997	Strategic Action Plan finalized
April 1, 1997	Implementation begins
May 16, 1997	Draft Evaluation Plan due to funder
June 13, 1997	Final Evaluation Plan due to funder (All baseline data collected)
August 8, 1997	1st Progress Report to funder Design Community Survey
September 1, 1997	Pilot test Community Survey
October 1, 1997	Distribute Community Survey
October 30, 1997	School Health Fair
November 15, 1997	Analyze results from Community Survey
December 5, 1997	2nd Progress Report to funder
December 15, 1997	Design telephone interview of teachers
January 15, 1998	Conduct telephone interview of teachers
February 15, 1998	Analyze results of telephone interview of teachers, update indicator data, collect documentation forms, prepare Draft Evaluation Report
March 1, 1998	Share Draft Evaluation Report with collaborative
March 15, 1998	Revise Evaluation Report, revise Strategic Action Plan and Evaluation Plan based on evaluation findings
April 3, 1998	3rd Progress Report, Evaluation Report, Updated Evaluation Plan, Updated Strategic Action Plan completed, etc., etc.

Worksheet 10

Checklist: Components of the Evaluation Work Plan

Component	Included in Plan?
1. Child and family outcomes	_____
2. Indicators	_____
3. Baseline data	_____
4. Assumptions	_____
5. Evaluation questions (implementation, short-term outcome, long-term outcome)	_____
6. Methods (for each evaluation question)	_____
7. Tasks	_____
8. Person(s) for each task	_____
9. Timeline for each task	_____
10. Overall timeline	_____
11. Appendix with data collection instruments	_____

PART III.
ANALYSIS:
WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THESE DATA?