

Evaluating Your Support Services for Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families

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Before we begin



This webinar will be recorded and shared with you.



Submit your questions via chat.



Please complete our survey at the end of the webinar.

Our mission



Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system



Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

Goals for this webinar

- 1 Share effective evaluation techniques for family support programs
- 2 Provide strategies to improve your evaluation practices, regardless of your current level of evaluation efforts
- 3 Share ideas from the field
- 4 Answer your questions about program evaluation
- 5 Help programming staff feel more comfortable with evaluation



Poll question

How would you describe your current understanding of evaluation techniques commonly used in child welfare?



Prioritizing evaluation is important!

- Understand if your own support programs are effective
- Learn how families think and feel about the services they receive
- Help you make funding or growth decisions
- Build the knowledge of the child welfare field at large

Common barriers to effective evaluation



- Lack of funding
- Lack of expertise
- Ethical concerns
- Staff resistance

You don't have to be an evaluation expert!





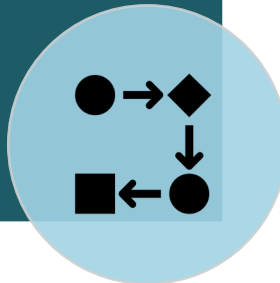
A disclaimer

This is **not** everything you need to know about evaluation.

Evaluation basics

- Understand how your service **functions**
- Examine structure, policies, procedures
- Identify barriers

Process evaluation



- Understand service **effectiveness**
- Understand if service is working as intended
- Test of logic model

Outcome evaluation





Make a plan to evaluate both process and outcomes

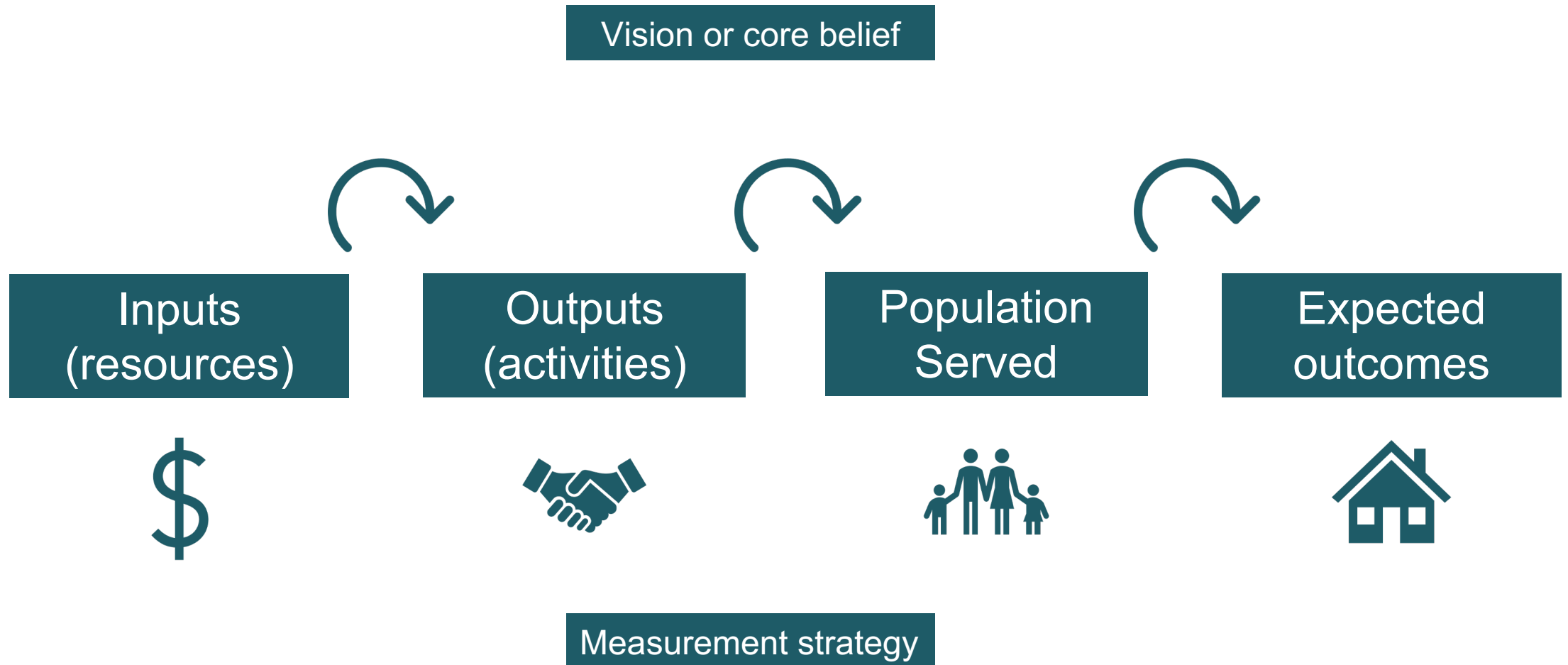
They both give you important information
and good evaluation plans will include both.

Evaluation basics

Logic models

- Simple illustration of how your service should work and the outcomes you expect to achieve
- Inputs and outputs
- Expected outcomes and how you measure them
- Important to have a unified understanding of what you're aiming to achieve with the service

Simplified logic model



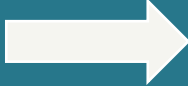

Logic model builder available through Child Welfare Information Gateway!

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/effectiveness/logic-model/>

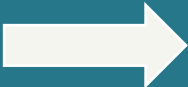

Evaluation techniques to consider

- Are families using our services?
Should we provide more or less?  Track participation, number served
- Where do our families live and how are we reaching them?
Who are we missing?  Map service engagement, collect demographics
- What do families think of our services? What could we improve?  Satisfaction surveys, focus groups

Evaluation techniques to consider

- What barriers are families encountering as they access our services? How can we improve service delivery?  Process evaluation, process mapping, family surveys
- Are we meeting families' needs? Are their needs changing?  Ongoing needs assessments

Evaluation techniques to consider

- Are our services effective? Do they work as designed? Would a different approach be more effective?  Track outcomes, pre- and post-intervention assessments
- How do these services fit together with the other services families use? Where are the gaps? How can we coordinate as a system to meet families' needs?  Service-array assessment

Evaluation techniques to consider

- How are we meeting families' needs over time? Do the positive outcomes remain over time? How are we evolving? Longitudinal studies, ongoing needs assessments



Type in “chat”

Have you used any of these techniques before?

What successes or challenges did you experience in using any of these techniques?

Don't worry! It's not all or nothing!





Getting to “good”

- Start small by surveying your families about their needs
- Plan to review and take action based on results
- Ongoing needs assessments over time can give you a better picture
- Get staff buy-in



Keep it simple with a plan for growth

Don't get overwhelmed by trying to implement too many evaluation strategies at once. It's fine to start small and plan to grow your efforts over time.

Asking the right questions

Surveys are only as good as the questions you ask.

Type into “chat”: What’s wrong with this survey question?

1) How are we doing?

Type here...

Asking the right questions

Surveys are only as good as the questions you ask.

Here's a better survey question to get a more useful set of answers:

1) Please select to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: **Staff are knowledgeable about the needs of youth who have experienced foster care.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Asking the right questions

Surveys are only as good as the questions you ask.

Here's a better survey question to get a more useful set of answers:

2) Please explain your answer.

Type here...

Moving to “better”

- Build on the data you are already collecting. How can you expand?
- Be guided by the questions you’d like to be able to answer.
- Use a logic model. Are the services you provide likely to lead to your desired outcomes?
- Bring stakeholders together to have more robust assessment discussions.





Don't reinvent the wheel

What are other agencies or systems doing to evaluate their services? Tap into peer connections to get ideas for improvement and share tools and strategies for success.



Approaching “best”

- Partner with universities
- Compare similar populations receiving different services
- Test your results by trying to replicate them in a new region, with a new population, etc.
- Have different programs use similar instruments and compare results
- Track longitudinal data
- Engage in full system assessment

Support Services Assessment Tool

Service	Provided (yes/no)	Adoption/ permanency-competent	Trauma-informed	Designed with family and youth input and feedback	Family-focused (e.g., engages the whole family appropriately)	Outcome-evaluated/ evidence-based (with positive results)	Items identified by the child welfare system]								Average
Scale: 1=Poor; 2=Fair; 3=Good; 4=Excellent															
Peer Support															
Peer support for parents and caregivers	Yes	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0									
Peer support for children & teens	Yes	3.0	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.0									
Mentoring for parents	No														
Mentoring for children & teens	Yes	1.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0									
Average peer support		2.5	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0									
Advocacy															
Advocacy for child or parents' needs	Yes	2.0													
Educational support and advocacy															
Average advocacy		2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0									

Service quality a

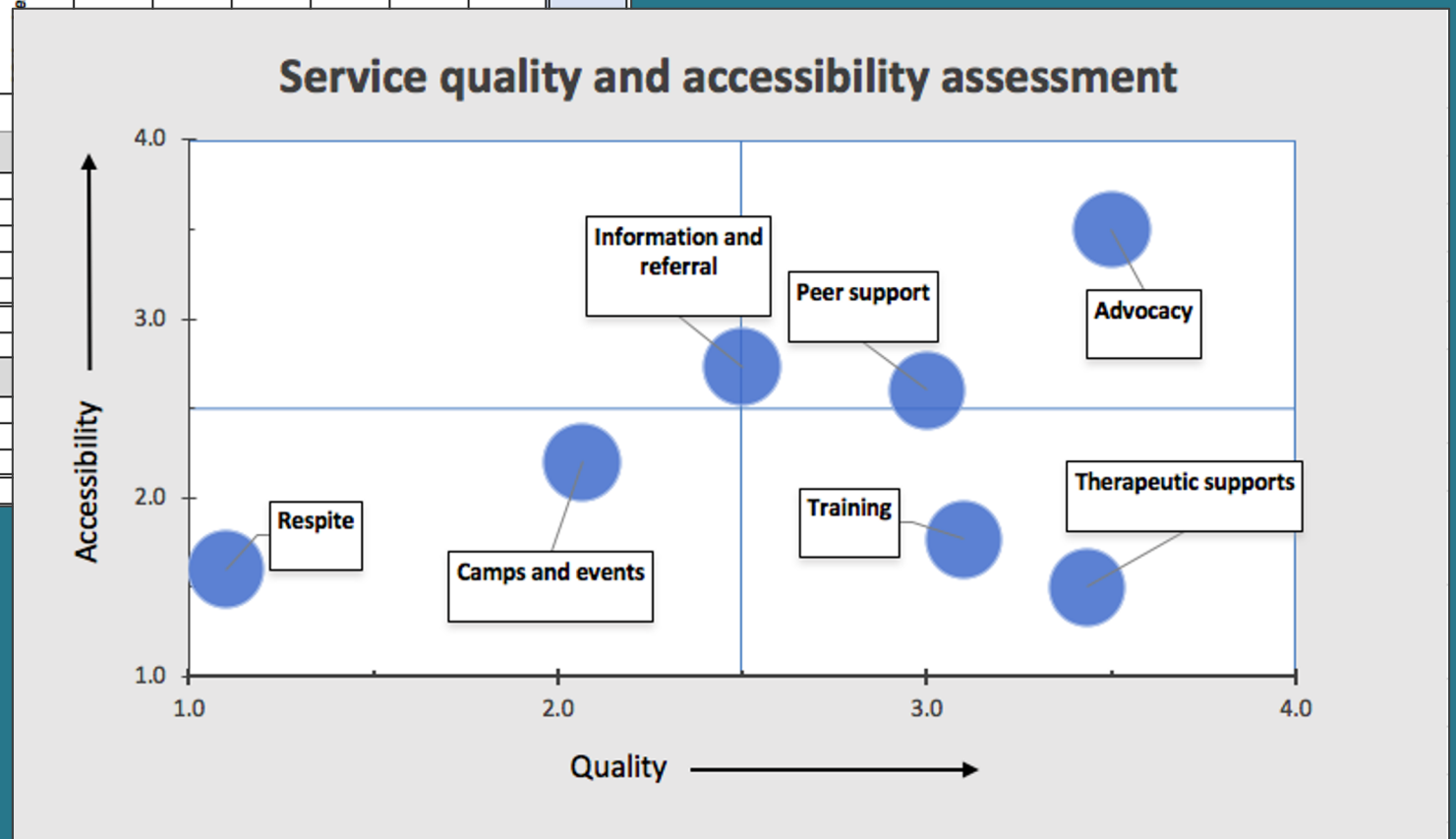
4.0

3.0

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ssibility

Int





Assessment tools

- Casey Life Skills Assessment
- Child and Adolescent Strengths and Needs Assessment
- Child Behavior Checklist
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment
- Global Assessment of Relational Functioning
- North Carolina Family Assessment General Services + Reunification
- Parenting Stress Index
- Post Traumatic Stress Index
- Youth Connections Scale



Ideas from the field

- Vermont Permanency Survey
- Adoption Support and Preservation, TN
- The Child Wellbeing Project, NC
- The Children's Home Kinship Care Program, FL



Ideas from the field

- Native American Youth and Family Center Foster Care Support Program, OR
- A Second Chance, Inc., PA
- Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP)
- Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition of Greater St. Louis, MO



Answering your questions



Type in “questions”

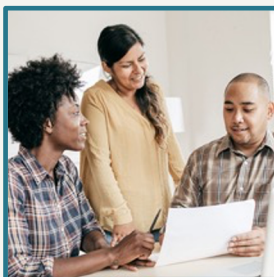
What other questions do you have?



Minority Professional Leadership Development Program (MPLD)

Are you ready to become a transformational leader?

- ✓ Learn from national child welfare experts.
- ✓ Complete an action research project that addresses a challenge in your workplace.
- ✓ Network with colleagues from around the country.
- ✓ Learn about disparity and disproportionality in child welfare.



Apply for the MPLD program by June 21, 2021:
www.adoptuskids.org/mpld

Questions? Email mpld@adoptuskids.org



AdoptUSKids resources and services

- [Capacity-building services](#): Free, tailored assistance based on your needs and goals.
- [Publications, articles, and webinars](#): Sharing best practices on recruitment, family support programs, youth engagement, and more!



Resources mentioned during this webinar

Mentioned during this webinar:

- [Support Services Assessment Tool](#)
- [Evaluating Family Support Programs](#)
- [Support Matters](#) (find program profiles here)
- QIC-AG [Vermont Permanency Survey](#)
- Child Welfare Information Gateway [logic model builder](#)
- [Treat Them Like Gold](#) NC publication
- HHS publication Evaluation Issues: [Assessing the Field of Post-Adoption Services](#)



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