

III. DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

STANDARD III.A. THE PROGRAM STAFF REGULARLY MONITORS CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT.

Regular developmental monitoring is an ongoing approach that uses a variety of appropriate methods and sources for information. This information allows staff, in collaboration with parents, to individualize programming according to the strengths and developmental needs of each child. In addition, it provides sharing opportunities between program staff and parents. A timely and systematic approach to developmental monitoring assures early identification of children who require referral for formalized assessment or transition to specialized services.

Quality Indicator III.A.1. The staff monitors children's development using a variety of appropriate methods.

Laying the Foundation

It is important that staff and parents understand what each child is able to do and what developmental skills are challenging for each child. A child's development in all domains must be monitored. This information helps the staff and parents to understand what each child is able to do and what developmental skills are challenging for each child. This information will help staff and parents develop individual goals as well as to plan learning experiences that will enhance each child's strengths while providing the right challenge that helps the child move to the next level.

Best practice uses an approach to developmental monitoring that accesses multiple sources of information, uses a variety of information, looks at each child's development across multiple domains, and is sensitive to a child's cultural background in order to provide the best "picture" of the child. Milestones in the development of cognitive, emotional, language, motor perceptual, and social domains should be viewed as dynamic and flexible since the child's development is affected by many factors including heredity, health status, and temperament. In addition, environment, child rearing practices and economic and social status also impact the child's development.

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A timely and systematic approach to developmental monitoring will assist in identifying which children require more in-depth evaluation of their developmental needs. Children who need a more intensive evaluation in an area should be referred to the local Child and Family Connections, which is the system point of entry for all eligibility determination and provision of early intervention services in the State of Illinois System. Early identification and referral, known as Child Find, will assure that children receive the benefit of the services that they may need at the time in life when interventions are most effective. Research has shown that interventions have the greatest impact when they occur during the periods of most rapid growth and development, which occur earliest in life (Shore, Rima 1997, XI).

Monitoring the medical status of all children in birth to three programs ensures that well child examinations and immunizations recommended for infants and toddlers are completed in a timely manner. This monitoring is necessary, not only for the well being of each individual child, but also for the benefit of all of the children who participate in activities at the program site. Parents should be provided with health and wellness resources and referral information, but are expected to make and keep their own appointments. Some parents may need additional support in accomplishing this very important part of the developmental monitoring process. Each individual program will determine the levels of additional support provided to families. See Appendix I Early Intervention Lead Agency and System listings including phone numbers.

The vision and hearing status of all infants and toddlers must be monitored. Formal screenings of all children should take place annually and should be conducted by a trained practitioner. Program staff should be attuned to monitoring the vision and hearing abilities of all children during program activities. All staff must be aware of how vision and hearing develop in very young children and the important role vision and hearing play in the development of young children. They need to become familiar with ways they can facilitate the children's vision and hearing development. If concerns are identified, staff should be prepared to help parents identify and locate the resources they need to meet the vision and hearing needs of their children.

Young children also benefit from having their dental status monitored. Child dental examinations provided early in life can help parents to learn about good dental care routines, healthy dental practices and the prevention of bottle mouth syndrome.

Getting Started

It is important to remember to define child progress in terms of individual development and learning, rather than by comparisons with other children or against a set of criteria. A variety of techniques should be used to monitor child development:

- Use an informal play-based approach to developmental monitoring.
 1. Models of informal play-based approaches should be studied. Select the model most appropriate for the program.
 2. Program staff must be knowledgeable of child development.
 3. Staff must be skilled in infant and toddler screening and assessment.
 4. This process should be carried out twice a year in collaboration with the parent.

A play-based assessment involves observations and interactions in a play situation, as well as parent report. The advantage of play-based assessments is that all areas of development can be observed in a natural setting and that children do not perceive that they are being tested. After the play session, parents and staff record observations on developmental checklists. Some programs may develop their own checklists and others may use commercially available criterion referenced checklists. A review of a variety of infant scales reveals that there is a significant degree of consistency among developmental instruments regarding the sequence and age range of child development benchmarks.

- Use a formal child developmental screening instrument for developmental monitoring. Apply the same process described for a play-based assessment. A limitation of formal screening instruments is that they tend to focus on measuring development in discrete developmental domains. It is important to note that the clinical judgment of knowledgeable team members typically

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provides more insight into child development than passing or not passing any particular item. Screenings provide an opportunity to determine each child's strengths, methods for learning and areas to be developed. Do not use the words "failed the screening" but rather talk in terms of "needs further evaluation." Use the screening process as a forum for providing information to the parent on their child's development as well as providing anticipatory guidance. There is no one screening instrument that is recommended as the best one to use. Some global developmental screening instruments that are used with infants and toddlers include:

1. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire
 2. The Battelle Screening Test
 3. The revised Denver Developmental Screening Test
- Use staff observation as a supplement to formal and informal developmental monitoring, as previously described. Observe children on home visits, in playgroups and during other program activities. Record child development observations and progress at the end of each session. Comment on children's play interests, make notes on child development and provide anticipatory guidance. Provide parents with a copy of the child's progress notes.
 - Use parent observation as a supplement to formal and informal developmental monitoring. Ask parents "what's new?" and record their observations about child development routinely in home visit logs or child development diaries. Provide parents opportunities to share what's new with their children with other parents in the program. This can be done at the beginning of each playgroup.
 - Assist and encourage parents to keep portfolios of their child's development in a variety of forms such as scrapbooks, journals or videotapes. Take pictures of the children engaged in various play activities and give them to the parents. Encourage the parents to write captions for the pictures. Design scrapbook pages that focus on child developmental milestones and physical development. Celebrate the importance of parent/child interactions.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

- Develop systems for monitoring and documenting well child checks and immunizations. Provide dental, hearing and vision screening tests in collaboration with the local health department. Pay particular attention to health histories and risk factors such as prematurity, low birth weight or exposure to substance abuse and the possible impact on later development. Develop a health care plan as part of each child's Family Action Plan. Assist parents to access the care they need to meet the basic health needs of their child and family.
- Interpret all results of developmental monitoring within the framework of family functioning, including relationships between children and their parents. Review the results to determine if the findings "match" what staff and family know about the child. Draw no conclusions without parent input and support.
- Celebrate the accomplishments of all children. Acknowledgement of developmental progress reinforces the family, the care of their child and encourages program participation.

Moving Forward

Learn more about the role of play in developmental assessment and assessments that use a play-based format.

Look at a variety of screening instruments in depth.

Develop keen observation skills.

Explore strategies for documenting observations.

Find out about health resources in your community and how to access them.

Take classes or attend workshops focused on infant/toddler developmental assessment.

Participate in community child find activities.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Program staff representatives attend and participate in the local interagency council of the Illinois Early Intervention System.

Quality Indicator III.A.2. Developmental monitoring views the child from a holistic perspective within the context of the family and the community.

Laying the Foundation

The whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. This is especially true when looking at the development of the young child. The astute child development practitioner can observe a child and parent at play and obtain information about all areas of child development, as well as gain insight into the nature of the parent/child relationship and its potential impact on learning. Children and parents both have unique temperaments, personalities, strengths and needs that come together to either facilitate or inhibit learning. In addition to these factors inherent in the individual there are an infinite number of outside variables that impact an individual's life at any point in time. Therefore, many factors must be considered in the developmental monitoring process. As stated in the previous quality indicator, it is important to consider an approach that uses multiple sources of information and types of information, uses a variety of tools to gather information, looks at child development across all developmental domains, and is sensitive to a child's cultural background within the context of the family. The staff must be able to pull all these pieces together in order to have a total view of the child.

It is important for all staff to recognize that parents know their children the very best and have the ability to interpret their child's behavior within the context of their own family and culture. Parents should be encouraged to share their observations and concerns with staff and, in turn, the staff should share observations regarding the child. Parent must be part of the developmental monitoring process and involved in all decisions and follow-up for further evaluation and interventions for their children.

Getting Started

When establishing a developmental monitoring process that is holistic and conducted within the context of the family and the community, consider the following factors:

(Developmental Monitoring and Accountability cont.)

- Are **multiple sources** of information used?
 1. Parents and families
 2. Program staff
 3. Other child care and education providers
 4. Health care providers
 5. Other agencies serving the family

- Are **multiple types** of information collected?
 1. Medical health data
 - a. Maternal
 - b. Prenatal and birth
 - c. Health history
 - d. Physical development measurements
 - e. Immunization records
 - f. Dental history
 2. Developmental milestones
 3. Observations by parents
 4. Staff observations
 5. Anecdotal records
 6. Informal checklists
 7. Screening data
 8. Formal developmental tests
 9. Informal developmental tests
 10. Vision and hearing screening tests
 11. Videotapes of parent/child interactions
 12. Photographs of children

- Are there a **variety** of tools being utilized to gather information?
 1. Parent interview forms
 2. Parent questionnaires
 3. Developmental screening instruments
 4. Developmental assessment instruments
 5. Video tape

- Is development monitored and viewed across **multiple domains**?
 1. Cognitive Development

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

2. Emotional Development
 3. Language Development
 4. Motor Development
 5. Physical Development and health
 6. Social Development
 7. Emotional Development
 8. Sensory Processing Development and Coping
- **Have relevant family factors** been considered?
 1. The developmental monitoring process is conducted at times and in places that are convenient for the family and appropriate for the child.
 2. The developmental monitoring process is conducted in the child's primary language.
 3. The beliefs, values and practices of the family's culture are considered.
 4. The family's social support system is identified and considered.
 5. Family risk factors are considered.
 6. The family's educational background is considered.
 7. The impact of the community is taken into account.
 - **Is the family involved** in the developmental monitoring process? The family is involved in:
 1. Considering the information
 2. Drawing conclusions
 3. Developing goals that build on their strengths and needs

Moving Forward

Become skilled at administering a developmental screening tool.

Learn more about the inner connecting relationship between all aspects of a child's development.

Review Family Plans to see how information from Developmental Monitoring can be used to set meaningful goals.

Learn more about relevant family factors.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Attend continuing education programs that address different types of assessment.

Become more connected and involved with the program's community.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Quality Indicator III.A.3. The staff obtains information from different sources and shares the information with parents. The parents are further involved in the interpretation of this information in support of the child's development.

Laying the Foundation

In order to identify developmental concerns in infants and toddlers, it is important to understand the typical infant/toddler developmental process as well as the factors that influence development in the young child. According to Samuel J. Meisels and Emily Fenichell, the following observations should be considered with care when making decisions about types of assessments to gain information needed to design meaningful services and interventions.

1. Child development is complex and is determined by multiple interdependent factors.
2. Characteristics of the infant and young child are subject to environmental influences that can support or impede development.
3. The child's parents are the primary mediators of societal and cultural influences.
4. The family system is of the utmost importance in the child's development.
5. Just as children go through a process of development, so does parenthood (Meisels, Samuel and Emily Fenichel 1996).

Parents bear the responsibility of raising their children and therefore are the most important members of the developmental monitoring team. Furthermore, the family is the most important source of information about the child's development. Parents must be treated with utmost respect and consideration, and given support during the developmental monitoring process. Parental participation and opinion must be valued and utilized if the results are to be meaningful. Furthermore, it is important that the staff is aware of how their own values and expectations about families and children can influence their perceptions.

Getting Started

The following suggestions can facilitate parent participation in the developmental monitoring process:

- Inform parents about the purpose of the developmental monitoring process.
- Describe the areas to be assessed and how they will be monitored.
- Design flexible developmental monitoring procedures to encourage and include parental cooperation.
- Respect, value and document parental observations of the child in the home environment.
- Schedule developmental procedures at a time convenient for the parent and appropriate for the child.
- Conduct developmental monitoring in settings that are familiar and comfortable for children and families to encourage optimal sharing by all family members.
- Value questions and concerns identified by the parents.
- Listen to parents and interview them with sensitivity and respect.
- Observe parent/child interactions to gain information about child growth and development. Be careful not to make complex inferences about the parent/child relationship beyond the scope of your own professional training.
- Use developmental monitoring information for generating child development goals with the family.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

- Consider issues of cultural diversity in the developmental monitoring process.
- Share developmental monitoring information in an integrated jargon-free manner that emphasizes the child's strengths.
- Document developmental monitoring in writing. Share information with the parents using the language they understand. Share written copies with the parent.
- Offer to send a copy of any written reports to additional parties at the parents' request.
- Assure parents that records are confidential. Let parents know that they have a right to see any reports or records on file about their children.
- Focus on the child's abilities and not on scores.
- Do not use the terms "pass" or "fail," but in collaboration with the parents identify areas in which the child is "competent" or areas that are "of concern" and need further assessment.
- Inform parents about the early intervention system and procedures that follow referral to the local Child and Family Connections.

Moving Forward

Consider the following content critical to developmental monitoring in the staff development opportunities scheduled during the year:

- Learn more about involving parents in the developmental screening and assessment process.
- Learn more about observing parent/child interactions.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

- Learn more about how to address areas of concern both within the program and/or in the community.
- Learn more about the options in the community available to families when areas of development are "of concern."
- Identify professionals from a variety of professional backgrounds who can provide interdisciplinary training.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Quality Indicator III.A.4. Children are referred to the Early Intervention System when appropriate.

Laying the Foundation

It is imperative that infant and toddler program staff members recognize the importance of identifying children with special needs early and refer them to the Illinois Early Intervention System. The initial point of entry to this system is called the Child and Family Connections (CFC). The CFC will determine eligibility, evaluate as appropriate and develop an Individualized Family Service Plan if the child is eligible for services.

The development and implementation of an effective, efficient referral system is one of the first steps in the provision of a system of support for infants and toddlers and their families. Information is provided in the Curriculum and Service Provision section of this Resource Guide, Quality Indicator II.A.1., in support of the following statements. An important developmental period in an individual's life occurs during the first three years. During this period brain growth is rapid and the neural connections are made that lay the foundation for development. The first quality indicator materials in the Curriculum and Service Provision Research of this guide have described that portions of the brain that are not stimulated and reinforced are at risk for being "pruned." Pruning is a term used to describe the process by which the brain organizes itself by eliminating those cells that are not being utilized. The saying "if you don't use it you will lose it" is certainly over simplified, however not far from the truth. What children experience and how they experience their world literally grows their brain and influences the rest of their lives.

Getting Started

Referral for early intervention services is the process by which a child whose screening results indicate the need for further evaluation is identified to the early intervention system. In order to assure that infants and toddlers who may need early intervention services receive those services, program staff should:

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

- Know the location and phone number of your local CFC, the early intervention system point of entry.
- Understand how to make a referral to the early intervention system.
- Establish program policies and procedures for referral.
- Understand the eligibility criteria for receiving early intervention services.
- Know what services are offered by the early intervention system.
- Communicate with parents that they have a right to receive early intervention services, if their child is determined eligible.
- Prepare parents to be ready to answer the questions that will be asked of them including: pregnancy, birth history, health records, developmental milestones, behavioral and developmental observations that will assist in assessing the child's needs.
- Help parents come to term with their fears, concerns and needs by assuring them that early intervention benefits children and families.
- Help transition families into the early intervention system.
- Follow-up on referrals made to the Child and Family Connections and also with the families referred.
- Collaborate with the development and implementation of the Individualized Family Service Plan, if it is determined to be appropriate.
- Know a contact at the Department of Human Services, the Early Intervention Lead Agency, to be used if needed.
- Advocate for families referred to the early intervention system and establish contacts with other agencies that support families.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Moving Forward

Stay informed about the continuing changes in the Illinois Early Intervention System including eligibility criteria and new program development.

Attend meetings of the Local Interagency Council (LIC) and Birth to Three Assurance Networks.

Read about the history and importance of early intervention.

Visit an early intervention program in your area.

Obtain copies of the health history and the IFSP forms so you are familiar with the documents and better able to prepare parents for the paperwork in the early intervention system.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Quality Indicator III.A.5. Families are informed of appropriate programs in the community by the child's third birthday.

Laying the Foundation

Complete and accurate information about programs and services available in the community is critical so parents can make choices that are appropriate and continuous for their children when they leave or transition from the birth to three program. One of the responsibilities of birth to three programs is to not only identify programs that are available when the child turns three but also provide guidelines on what parents should look for in quality programs. Conversations and planning about future programs and services should begin with parents well before the child's third birthday so that the movement forward or transition to the next program can happen in an unhurried, smooth, and uninterrupted manner. Many programs participate in community efforts to produce a directory of available programs and services that can be shared with families. They also build relationships and at times form written agreements with other community programs so that children can experience developmental programs that build on and support the child's previous education and care. Program leadership must take the initiative to develop and maintain policies on procedures that support a continuity of care and education for children and families.

Getting Started

Identify preschool program options in your community. Visit the programs to determine what services are available. Introduce yourself and your program. Leave a brochure and some referral forms. Obtain brochures for parents and invite the preschool program staff to visit your birth to three program. Work collaboratively with community agencies, for example libraries and Child Care Resource and Referral Offices (CCR&Rs), where information about community preschools is shared. Guidelines on what parents should look for in quality programs are available at CCR&R Offices

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

and from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Include the following preschool options for parents to consider:

- School District Pre-kindergarten Programs
- Head Start Programs
- Other Preschool Programs including child care (center and home-based) and private preschools
- Community Preschool Programs
- School District Early Childhood Special Education Programs
- Library Story Hours

Develop a transition goal in the family plan for each child who will be leaving the Birth to Three Program in the coming year that includes the preschool option chosen by the parents. Prepare parents to become their children's advocates through the transition period by assuring that each parent understands his/her child's developmental levels, learning styles and needed educational supports. Encourage parents to be actively involved in the children's education throughout their lives.

It may be helpful, when planning transitions to any community program, to develop transition agreements between the birth to three program and the preschool program that include agreed upon criteria for at risk factors. The following is an example of a process to develop a transition agreement if the child is going to attend the school district's pre-kindergarten program.

- The pre-kindergarten program will automatically accept all birth to three program participants into their pre-kindergarten program, if the family met the agreed upon initial at-risk criteria. This is important because it may give parents an incentive to participate in the birth to three program. Also, it creates the opportunity for

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uninterrupted services.

- The birth to three program will help parents follow the procedures necessary to establish residency in their home school district.
- The birth to three program should inform parents about school district health requirements and support parents in getting updated physical examinations and immunizations for their children.
- The birth to three program, in collaboration with the pre-kindergarten program, will assure that parents have an opportunity to visit the pre-kindergarten program and ask questions.
- The birth to three program will share developmental monitoring information with parental consent and help parents complete required information forms. Using this process makes it unnecessary for these families to go through the pre-kindergarten program screening.
- The birth to three program will work together with parents to transfer relevant records to school districts. Parents may play an active role by taking responsibility for delivering copies of records to the appropriate personnel in the school or next placement.
- The birth to three program will assist with transition in ways identified appropriate by the pre-kindergarten program or agreed upon by the birth to three program and the pre-kindergarten program.
- The birth to three program will follow-up with families in the pre-kindergarten program to see how the child has adjusted.

Moving Forward

Become informed about the state rules and regulations regarding eligibility criteria as well as individual program requirements.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Contact the receiving preschool programs to find out how the Birth to Three Program children are adjusting.

Consider setting up an open house for programs in your area serving the birth-to-three population and the programs serving the three-to-five population.

Obtain or, if need be, develop a current comprehensive directory of community programs with regular updates.

Obtain NAEYC's brochures that contain information on what to look for in a good program for the infant or toddler. The choices include "Finding the Best Care for Your Infant or Toddler" order #518, "A Caring Place for Your Infant" order #548, or "A Caring Place for Your Toddler" order #509. Call 1-800-424-2460 to order.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

PROGRAM STANDARD III.B. LEADERSHIP CONDUCTS REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM AND STAFF TO ASSURE THAT THE PHILOSOPHY IS REFLECTED AND GOALS OF THE PROGRAM ARE BEING FULFILLED.

Program and staff evaluation is an ongoing process that culminates in the improvement of program quality. To be successful in this endeavor, programs need to develop systems for observing, recording, and measuring the quality and significance of the program's progress and success toward the implementation of the Illinois Birth to Three Program Standards.

Quality Indicator III.B.1. An annual evaluation is conducted of program quality and progress toward goals.

Laying the Foundation

Effective program evaluation plays a major role in improving services for young children and their families and in demonstrating accountability. Program evaluation can serve as a tool for program improvement when it enables the staff to step back from the daily operations and consider how their practices are impacting the children and families they serve. It can highlight areas of strength and those that require improvement. A thorough program evaluation documents discrepancies between programmatic intent and actual practice, and also offers suggestions for modification. Simply stated, program evaluation should begin with two questions: **What is working? What can be improved?**

The best program evaluation is not a one-time event, but is an on-going process that involves looking at program implementation and program outcomes. Program evaluation is most effective when there is a commitment to documenting program functions over time. With an emphasis on process, a valid program evaluation becomes an instrument of continuous questioning, data collecting, and documenting. These findings then foster program changes that become the focus of another cycle of evaluation.

Evaluation is a collaborative process involving all the staff within the program, as well as the participating families and cooperating community agencies. When stakeholders see their participation as vital to the evaluation process, the program is likely to improve. When participants are involved in the evaluation process, the program will be more responsive to the children and families it is designed to serve. Furthermore, when cooperating community agencies are involved in the evaluation, effective collaborative relationships will be facilitated.

Getting Started

Program evaluation is most effective when it takes into consideration many different aspects of the program and uses a multi-faceted approach. The methods of inquiry should include observation, interviews, and a review of records to effectively capture how services are delivered and the impact of these services on families and children. Aspects of the program to be evaluated should include a review of:

- Administration including policies and procedures
- Curriculum and service delivery
- Multiple child and family outcomes
- Personnel providing services
- Environment in which the services are provided
- Collaborations with the community

An effective program evaluation begins with an initial evaluation plan at the beginning of the program year. In developing that plan, administrators with assistance from staff must:

- Review findings of program evaluation reports from the previous year.
- Review previous parent and staff satisfaction information.
- Identify all sources of information for the program.
- Discuss the evaluation process with staff.
- Select a self-assessment team that represents a broad spectrum of program participants and staff, including the administrator.
- Identify what information/data should be collected for the evaluation and review periodically.
- Outline an action plan delineating what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and when it should be done.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

- Document implementation of recommendations of previous program evaluations.
- Conduct ongoing staff evaluation.
- Review progress in implementation of recommendations quarterly.
- Document program highlights and concerns at monthly staff meetings.

Assessment is an integral part of program evaluation. The process of assessment supports an effective evaluation plan because it helps staff and administration focus on what is needed for quality program service delivery. It is an ongoing, open process, with regular and systematic feedback for the purpose of program improvement. In conducting self-assessment, the team must address the following aspects of the program:

- Governance and administration
- Implementation of the program model
- The program's day-to-day operations
- Staffing
- Staff Development
- Physical environment
- Record-keeping
- Family participation
- Child and family outcomes
- Interaction with the larger community
- The process of evaluation and monitoring itself

External evaluation needs to be conducted by objective, outside experts. It occurs on a time-limited basis, using a site visit to collect data through interviews, observations, and a review of records. The primary goal of an external evaluation is to determine how closely programs meet the grant requirements and the Birth to Three Program Standards. Although the main function of external evaluation is accountability, such an evaluation will serve as a catalyst for improvement and the identification of future goals. The Administration will:

- Consult with the funding agency to identify an external evaluation team that will validate the self-assessment.
- Establish contact with the external evaluation team
- Arrange for a site visit with the team.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

After the evaluations are completed, the self-assessment team must do the following to prepare and plan for the next program year:

- Analyze data from parent surveys and focus groups.
- Analyze data from staff surveys and focus groups.
- Analyze attendance records to determine which activities and events were well attended by participants.
- Compare information gathered about program activities throughout the year with the established goals and objectives.
- Review staff evaluation process.
- Incorporate information gathered from external evaluation team.
- Use all of the information gathered to generate a report highlighting:
 - How well the recommendations and goals from the previous year were implemented.
 - Strengths of the program
 - Suggested areas in need of improvement
 - Plans for the upcoming year.

Moving Forward

Become knowledgeable of and use the ISBE Self Evaluation Tool.

Review program observation tools.

Review Illinois Standards for Birth to Three Programs.

Review the data collection process and procedures.

Review *How Are We Doing? A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field* by Ahsan Nilofer and Lina Cramer in 1998 from Family Resource Coalition of America, Chicago, Illinois 60606.

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Quality Indicator III.B.2. The results of the program evaluation are reviewed annually and are used or considered in making organizational and/or programmatic changes.

Laying the Foundation

The purpose of program evaluation is to improve program quality and enhance service delivery to children and families. The evaluation process thus becomes a critical vehicle for informing program practice. Results of reports from the self-assessment and external evaluation teams are analyzed and an action plan is generated. This action plan determines program direction for the year. Evaluations should be ongoing. The impact of proposed changes is reviewed during subsequent self-assessments to ensure that the results of the changes are beneficial to the program and to the children and families served.

Getting Started

Enhanced service delivery occurs when programs use the evaluation process to effect change. In order for this to happen the self-assessment team should:

- Review the results of the self-assessment and external evaluation team reports.
- Develop an action plan that includes:
 - Program strengths that can be used to implement change
 - Areas that need improvement
 - Ways to improve
 - Individuals responsible for implementing this action plan
 - Timelines for implementing the action plan
 - Process of evaluation
- Use the evaluation data and action plan to organize for the coming year and prepare program requests for funding.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Moving Forward

Become knowledgeable of and use the ISBE Birth to Three Program Self-Assessment Evaluation Tool.

Network with other child and parent programs.

Review program observation tools.

Review staff satisfaction surveys.

Review parent satisfaction surveys.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Quality Indicator III.B.3. Leadership works in partnership with staff to plan, develop, and implement an effective staff evaluation process.

Laying the Foundation

Effective staff evaluation processes should be designed to both measure staff competence and to foster professional development of the staff member. The staff evaluation process should give staff useful feedback on meeting program participant needs, the opportunity to learn new strategies for meeting participant needs, and support from the supervisor and other staff members regarding how to improve the delivery of services to young children and their families. To achieve these goals the evaluator must work in partnership with staff to set specific procedures and criteria for evaluation. The criteria should relate to the program outcomes and be clearly communicated to the staff member. The criteria should be discussed before the evaluation begins and reviewed after the evaluation has been completed.

Evaluators should consider the variety of staff skills related to the effective delivery of services to infants and toddlers and their parents. Together with staff, the leadership can identify these skills, as well as how these skills can be demonstrated. By considering a wide array of staff skills and using multiple sources of information about a staff member's abilities and performance, the leadership can make more accurate evaluations.

A post-evaluation conference can give staff feedback on their strengths and weaknesses as well as give staff the opportunity to respond. Such conferences should deliver feedback in a positive way and offer ideas and suggest changes that are meaningful to the staff member. These conferences should also be conducted in a manner that is comfortable and supportive to the staff member. Evaluations should be linked to professional development as staff members are guided to set achievable goals, improve weak areas, and amplify strengths. Peer mentoring should be encouraged as experienced staff is enlisted to guide and support less experienced staff.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Evaluation procedures are most productive when staff have input into the evaluation criteria and when the evaluation process is used to further staff development. In addition, it has been found that staff finds evaluations most useful when evaluators themselves are well trained and competent and able to spend the time needed to complete a thorough evaluation.

Getting Started

The program leadership should plan the evaluation process with staff at the beginning of the program year.

- Encourage staff to set annual goals related to program outcomes and their own professional expectations.
- Support staff to both mentor and be mentored by other staff members.
- Seek and find relevant professional development activities related to the evaluation of each staff member.

The program leadership should implement the evaluation process with staff throughout the year

- Observe staff informally in a variety of settings throughout the year.
- Use positive reinforcement regularly to build up and support staff.
- Schedule formal staff observations as needed.
- Follow up formal staff observations with meaningful conferences.

Moving Forward

Join a study group for supervisors of birth to three programs that focuses on staff evaluation.

(Developmental Monitoring and Program Accountability cont.)

Visit other programs to see how program outcomes are related to meaningful staff evaluation.

Examine new models of evaluation for appropriate inclusion into your own program model.

Quote: "We don't know who we are until we see what we can do." - Martha Grimes