



Evaluating the Impact of Your Citizen Review Panels

Unbridled Possibility: Fifth Annual
Citizen Review Panel National Conference

May 25 - 26, 2006 – Louisville, Kentucky

What is evaluation?

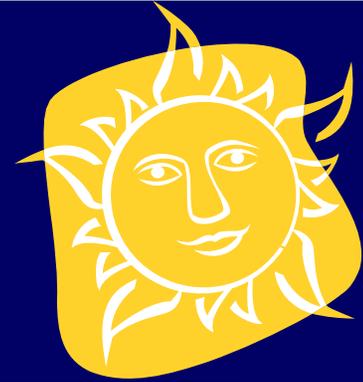


- "A systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about a program."

Source: The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families

- Measurement
- Determination of a program's value
- Professional value judgment
- Assessment of the extent program objectives have been attained.

Why evaluate your program?



We are in an era of accountability.

- Funding agencies demand information
- Resources are limited
- Elected officials and citizens care about efficiencies, accountability, performance and quality services and programs.

Source: Introduction to Program Evaluation – Dr. Suvedi
<http://cfaes.osu.edu/~brick/suved2.htm>

Why evaluate your program?



- Articulate program strengths and weaknesses
- See if you are accomplishing objectives
- See if the program is having an impact on a particular group or system
- Improve the quality of the program
- Fine tune your program
- Communicate important facts about the program
- Find out if the program is in compliance with requirements
- Determine if the program should be continued, expanded or terminated.

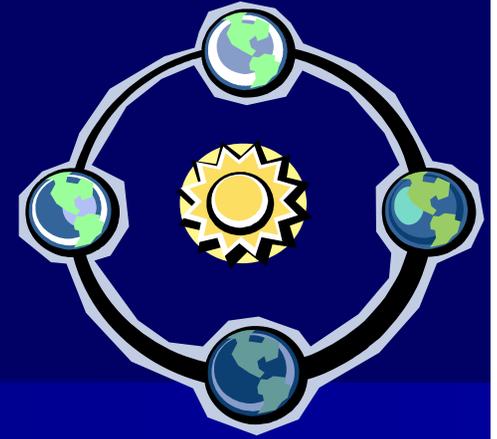
Issues to consider

- How can we protect the confidentiality of those who provide information?
- How do we ensure people make an informed consent to participate?
- How can we make sure we are culturally sensitive and inclusive?



Source: Tips for Conducting Program Evaluations, Author, Cheryl Hosley, Wilder Research, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 2005

Can the program be evaluated?

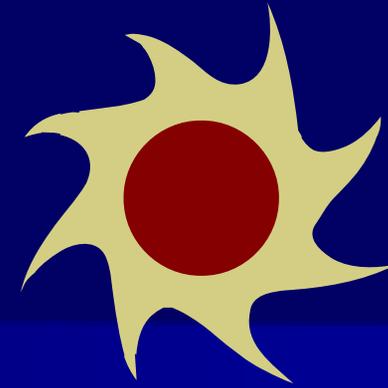


What can we evaluate?



- Client satisfaction (must define “client”)
- Compliance with rules, statutes, requirements
- Compliance with program standards
- Program activities (satisfaction of participants, impact, compliance?)
- Program outcome(s) or objective(s) (have they been achieved, impact?).
 - Impact of program on CPS
 - Impact of program on social work policy, practice and procedures
 - Impact of outreach into the community
 - Impact program has on the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families involved in the child protection system.

A general tip



Use Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) language whenever possible:

Safety, Permanency, Well-Being

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible.

Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Families have an enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

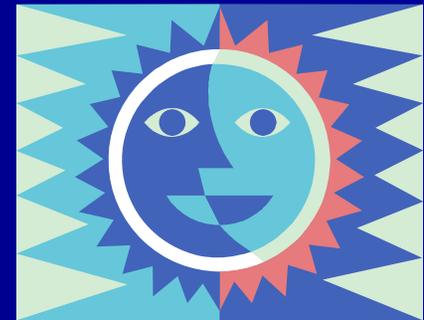
Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Clearly defined standards

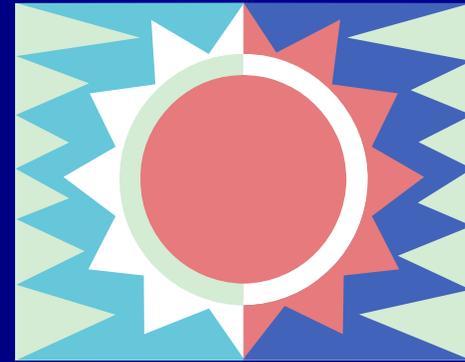
- Requirements and policies are stated in the federal Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-36) (Previously known as the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State Grant Program).
- State laws, program policies, operating procedures.

What are some of the requirements of the Citizen Review Panels?



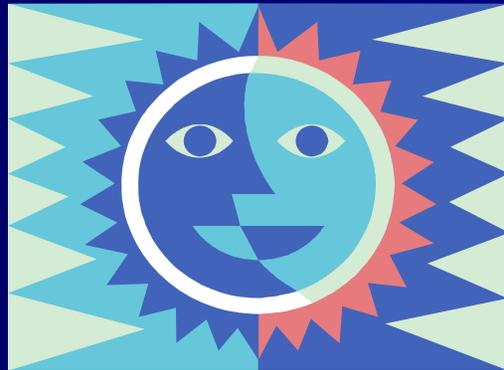
Clearly defined standards

**What's in
a name?**



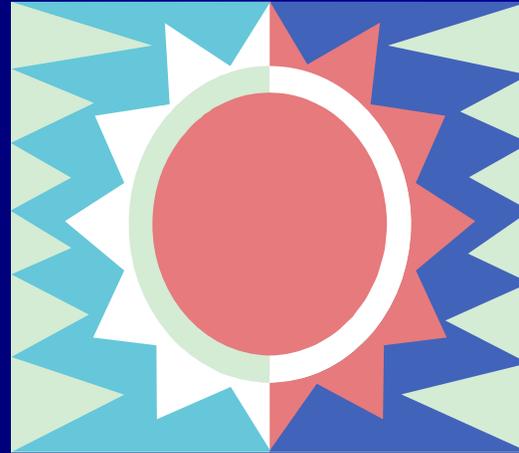
Clearly defined standards

**What is the
mission?**



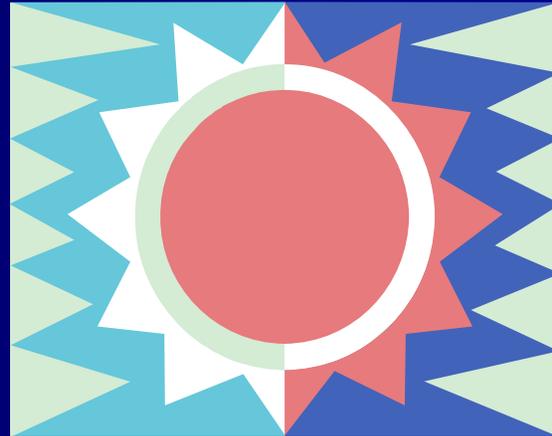
Clearly defined standards

**Do you
have a
slogan or
a logo?**



Clearly defined indicators

What are the indicators
or outcomes?



Activities

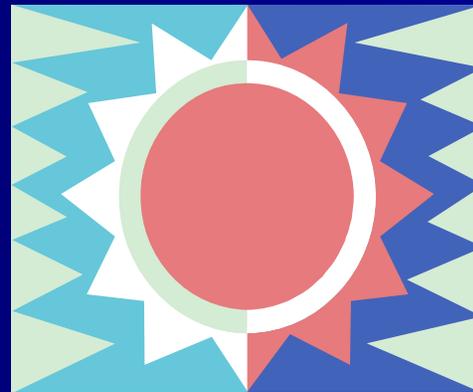
What do your panel members do?

How often?

How well?

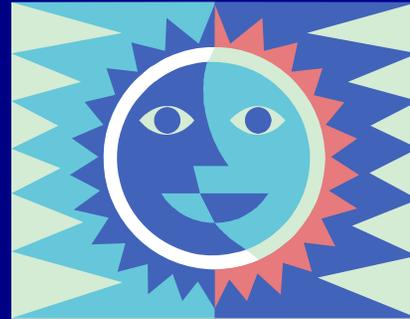
Good

participation?



Clear Objectives

What are your
program's
objectives?



What types of evaluations are there?

■ Impact evaluation:

To determine program results and effectiveness (merit or worth).

To help make major decisions about strengths, weaknesses, direction, continuation, reduction, expansion and funding.

AKA: Summative evaluation



■ Process evaluation:

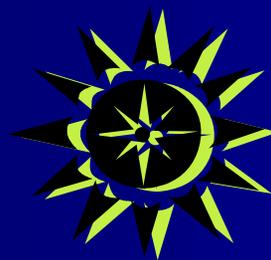
Focuses on providing information for program improvement, modification or management.

AKA: Formative evaluation

Source: Murari Suvedi, Associate Professor
Michigan State University
Department of Agricultural and Extension
Education

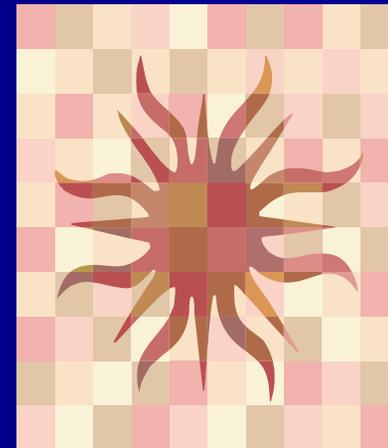
Methods for collecting information

- Written surveys or questionnaires
- Oral interviews – in person or on the telephone
- Review of records, data-bases, reports, research
- Focus groups
- Observation forms or check-lists.



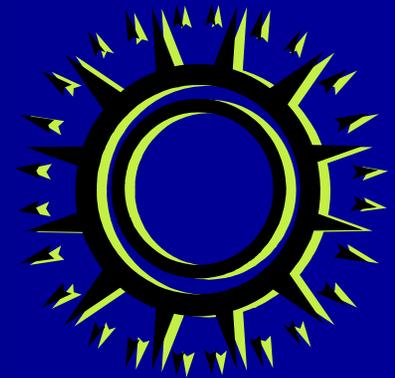
Steps of evaluation

- Plan
- Gather information
- Summarize information
- Compare information to outcomes, objectives or activities
- Analyze information
- Share the information
- Use the information.



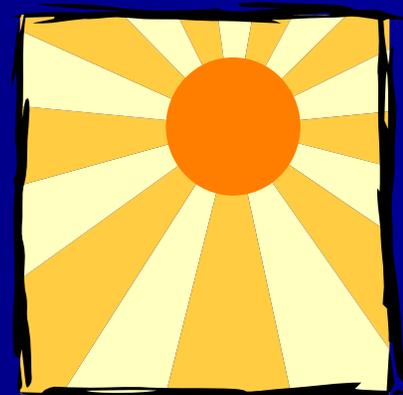
What should be included in the plan?

1. Who will coordinate the evaluation?
2. Who will conduct it?
3. What will you evaluate?
4. Why will you evaluate it?
5. To what standards, outcomes or objectives will you compare the information gathered?
6. How will you gather information?
7. From whom will you gather information?
8. What is the timeframe?
9. How will the information be summarized, analyzed and reported?
10. How will you use the information?



What should be included in the plan?

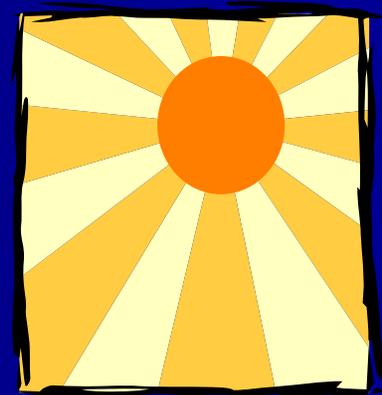
1. Who will coordinate the evaluation?
2. Who will conduct it?



What should be included in the plan?

3. What will you evaluate?

4. Why will you evaluate it?



What and why?



What?

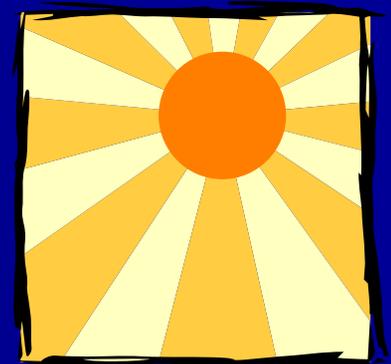
- Client satisfaction (must define "client")
- Compliance with rules, statutes, requirements
- Compliance with program standards
- Program objectives or outcomes (achieved? impact?)
- Program activities (satisfaction of participants, impact? compliance?).

Why?

- Articulate program strengths and weaknesses
 - See if you are accomplishing objectives
 - See if the program is having an impact on a particular group or system
 - Improve the quality of the program
 - Fine tune your program
 - Communicate important facts about the program
 - See if the program is in compliance with requirements
 - Determine if the program should be continued, expanded or terminated.
- Funding agencies demand information
 - Resources are limited
 - Elected officials and citizens care about efficiencies, accountability, performance and quality services and programs.

What should be included in the plan?

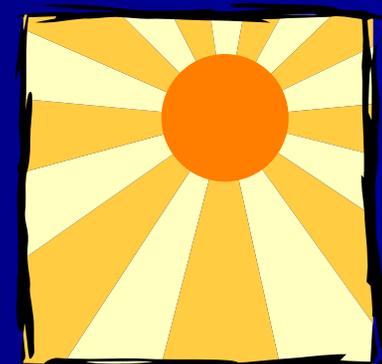
5. To what will you compare the information gathered?
(standards, outcomes, activities or objectives)



What should be included in the plan?

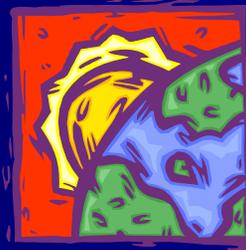
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How and who?

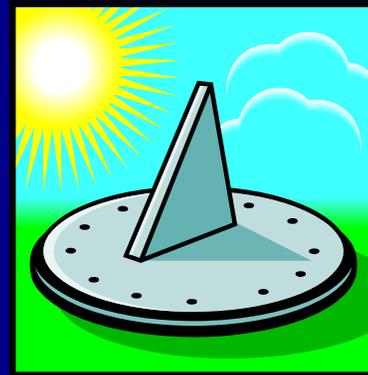
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The Program Manager's Guide to
Evaluation – ACF

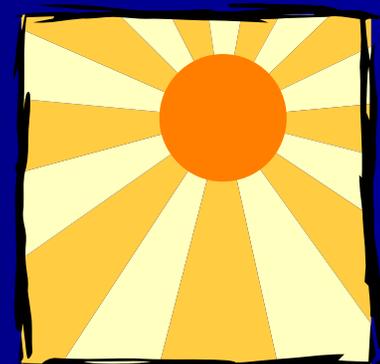
What should be included in the plan?

8. What is the timeframe?



What should be included in the plan?

9. How will the information be summarized, analyzed and reported?
10. How will you use the information?



How will you use it?

- **To answer questions about your program.**
 - Articulate program strengths and weaknesses
 - Identify what the program is doing well and what is needed to improve it
 - Assess program effectiveness in relation to the objectives
 - Assist in reviewing and updating the objectives, etc.
 - Assess program's impact on a particular group or system
 - Improve the quality of the program
 - Assist in developing guidelines for committee work of panels
 - Fine-tune your program
 - See if the program is in compliance with requirements
 - Communicate important facts about the program
 - Recruit new or more diverse panel members
 - Recruit more panels
 - Obtain funds and other resources
 - Support the continuation of existing panels and the establishment of new panels
 - Determine if the program should be continued, expanded or terminated.



Questionnaires and surveys



Design your questionnaires or surveys to assess the impact of your program by seeing if those surveyed think the program meets its stated outcomes, indicators or objectives.

- Keep your questionnaires concise and uncomplicated.
- Make the questionnaires "user friendly."
- If questionnaires are not filled out and collected on the spot, include an addressed, stamped return envelope and a deadline.
- You may want to offer incentives for getting questionnaires returned in a timely manner.

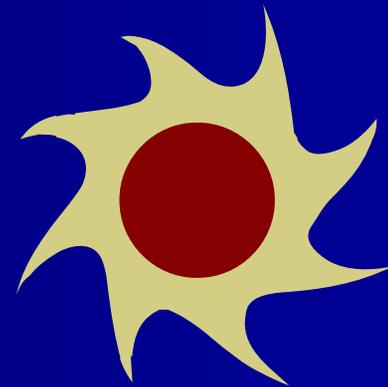
A general tip

Use Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) language whenever possible:

If using a questionnaire or survey, use the rating system used in the CFSR:

- Strength
- Area Needing Improvement
- Not Applicable

- Substantially Achieved
- Achieved
- Not Achieved



Focus Groups



A focus group is a structured discussion among a group of individuals selected to comment on, from personal experience, the topics that are the subjects of the evaluation.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are usually conducted with six to ten members who have similar characteristics. Members who are likely to participate and be reflective should be selected when possible.



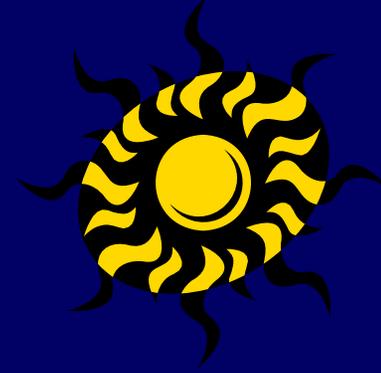
What groups of individuals might you invite to participate in your focus group(s)?

Focus Groups – Steps to take

- Articulate the purpose of the focus group
- Design five to six questions
- Develop a script of how the group will be conducted
- Plan the session (location, date, time...)
- Invite people to the session
- Conduct the focus group
- Interpret the results of the focus group
- Translate the results into action.



Focus Groups



- Questions should be open-ended and move from general to more specific (easy to challenging, impersonal to more personal).
- Questions should be as neutral as possible and should be worded clearly.
- Questions should give you the information you need.
- Questions should be relevant for the participants.
- The sequence and tone of the questions are as significant as the questions themselves.

What three questions might you ask the people in the focus group you identified?

Conducting focus groups

Opening

Thank people for coming.

Set the tone.

Give a brief description of your Program.

Make introductions.

Review the purpose of the group and the goals of the meeting.

Remind participants about confidentiality issues.

Tell them what will be done with the information they provide.

Review the ground rules.

Encourage participation.



Questions

Ask an opening question and make sure all opinions are heard.

Ask other questions in the same manner.

After all questions have been asked, see if anyone has other comments.

Closing

Tell participants about the next steps and what they can expect.

Tell them who to contact if they have further input.

Thank them for participating!

Focus Groups and Questionnaires – Interpret and report results



Record the results of the focus group.

- Include the date, background, purpose, participants, questions and a summary of the answers to the questions.

Record and summarize the answers to the questionnaire.

- Analyze the information, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Questionnaires and Focus Groups – Act on the results

- Highlight the main themes, issues, strengths, areas needing improvement and questions resulting from the focus groups.
- Discuss the implications at Panel meetings. Use results to review program standards, indicators, outcomes and objectives.
- Use the results to plan Panel activities, projects and committee work.
- Use the results to keep doing what is working well, make needed changes and focus or expand the work of the Panel.
- Include the information in Panel member recruitment, orientation, training and recognition materials.
- Include information in annual report.



Sources used in compiling this PowerPoint

Introduction to Program Evaluation by Murari Suvedi, Associate Professor,
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, Michigan State University

The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, Administration for Children and
Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Tips for Conducting Program Evaluation by Cheryl Hosley, Wilder Research,
January 2005

How to Conduct a Focus Group, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
(NICVA), Research and Policy Unit, October 2002

How to Conduct a Focus Group by Judith Sharken Simon, The Grantmanship
Center Magazine, Fall 1999

Focus Groups by Anita Gibbs, Social Research Update, Winter 1997

Basics of Conducting Focus Groups by Carter McNamara, PhD, 1999

10 Tips for Running Successful Focus Groups by Thomas L. Greenbaum, 9-14-98



Summary of Measuring the Effectiveness of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels

Purpose of the surveys

The Steering Committee of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels conducted surveys to determine if the Citizen Review Panels are meeting their stated objectives and what impact the panels have on the child protection system. The written surveys and focus groups were conducted in the late summer and fall of 2005. Written questions related directly to the objectives of the Citizen Review Panels were developed and approved by the Steering Committee. This questionnaire was distributed to all panel members, to the staff at the county social services Agencies who work with the panels and to staff members of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). In addition to the questionnaire, focus groups of panel and staff members were facilitated by Steering Committee members. Panel members developed the focus group questions which were approved by the Steering Committee. The results of the questionnaire and focus groups will be used for the following purposes:

- Assess the impact of the Citizen Review Panels on the child protection system
- Assess the effectiveness of the Citizen Review Panels in relation to the objectives
- Identify what the panels are doing well and where they need to improve
- Assist in the review and updating of the objectives of the Citizen Review Panels
- Assist in developing guidelines for the panels and their committees' work
- Support the continuation of the existing panels and the establishment new panels
- Recruit panels in other counties and recruit panel members
- Include information in the 2005 Minnesota Citizen Review Panel Annual Report.

Conclusions

The general consensus of those who responded to the questionnaire and participated in the focus groups is that the overall impact of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels is positive. The panels have led to specific improvements in the child protection system, especially at the county level. Based on the results of the questionnaire and focus groups, panel members may want to consider reaching out more into their communities. They will want to evaluate the answers on the questionnaires to see what objectives of the citizen review panels are rated as strengths and which ones are rated as needing improvement. The panels will want to review the comments made in the focus groups. Using information from the questionnaires and the focus group discussions panels can identify what is working well, what they would like to continue to do and what changes they would like to consider. Because half of the panel members responding rated this as an *area needing improvement*, the county and state child protection agencies will want to look closely at implementing the recommendations of the panels. Staff from these agencies should formally notify the citizen review panels of how and when their recommendations were or will be implemented, or why their recommendations have not been or will not be implemented. Panels should be updated regarding the implementation of their recommendations on a regular basis. There was strong support by the panel members and by the county and state staff members for the expansion of citizen review panels. The Minnesota Department of Human Services should continue to pursue the expansion of the Citizen Review Panels throughout the State. The Department should develop a panel recruitment plan that would include county agency staff and panel members in the expansion effort.

Please feel free to contact me.

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