EVALUATION DESIGN

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS, AND THEORY OF CHANGE

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The Transformation Journey in Early Childhood Education: Being & Documenting the Change
Overview

• The Role of Evaluation

• Evaluation Approaches

• Defining the Problem & Solutions

• Creating a Theory of Change
The Role of Evaluation – Component of a Continuous Improvement Process

Problem

Study: Evaluate—collect, analyze, and make conclusions

Act: Adopt, adapt, or abandon the change.

Plan: Identify improvement opportunity, examine data, and plan the change.

Do: Implement the change and monitor its progress.

Act

Plan

Do

Study
# Evaluation Approaches

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Needs Assessment - Defining the Problem

Can you help me, Mrs. Green? This wasn’t covered in any of my education courses!
Defining the Problem & Solutions

• What groups of people?

• What settings?

• How big of an issue is it?

• Are there realistic solutions to the address the problem, in consideration of:
  – Cultural resources
  – Economic resources
  – Political resources
  – Logistical resources

• Are potential solutions scalable and sustainable, given available resources?
Example Problems: Evaluating Curriculum Training

• Children are not learning the language and literacy skills prior to going to primary school
• Children are not in high-quality early childhood settings to learn needed skills
• Teachers are not trained to provide high-quality instruction
• Schools do not have the resources to provide professional development to teachers
• Children in public education settings are not learning at the rate expected by standards
• Some children are disadvantaged (e.g., subgroups based on gender, ethnicity, home language, geography, etc.)
Potential Solutions?

1. Staff Education
2. Staff Training and professional development
3. Low class sizes
4. Length of program
5. Family engagement/support
6. Early learning standards
7. Curriculum supports
8. Increase funding
9. Program monitoring

….and more
Stop Before You Go to Evaluation: Develop a Theory of Change
Theory of Change

- A guide to the improvement process – it documents your way of thinking
- Systematically organizes what results are expected, how results are achieved and what data or evidence is needed
  - Maps out activities, inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts, and underlying assumptions
  - Details the activities in the intervention (program) and how those activities will cause changes.
  - Research questions emerge from the Theory of Change.

If we invest these resources to accomplish these activities, then we should obtain these outcomes and cause change towards solving our problem
Putting Together the Pieces: What Matters for Children

- Love
- Health
- Nutrition
- Safety
- Stimulation
- Resources
- Stability

- Secure relationships
- Strong families
- Supportive communities
- Supportive schools
- Attentive adults
- Improved policies and programs
- Other
Putting Together the Pieces: What Matters for Children

What Matters for Children’s Development

- Initiative A
- Policy 1
- Program X
Developing a Logic for the Pieces that Matter

Next Generation

1st Grade Language & Literacy

Secondary School

Later life success

College Graduation
Specifying Intervention Assumptions for Desired Outcomes
Example Framework

**ULTIMATE GOAL - Problem to Solve**

**INPUTS/REOURCES**
- What resources do you have/need?

**ACTIVITIES**
- How do you go about doing those activities?

**OUTPUTS**
- What measures capture your activities?
  - What are the desired direct results for each activity?

**OUTCOMES**
- What are the specific changes in attitudes, behavior, knowledge, skills, capacity, or functioning expected as a result of activities?
  - What outcomes do you expect to achieve for each activity?

**CONTEXT:** What external factors that may the success of achieving desired outcomes?
Theory of Change: Coaching Early Childhood Teachers

ULTIMATE GOAL: Positive, significant, sustained outcomes for children and their families

ASSUMPTIONS (→ DECISIONS)
Basics
- Why coaching is needed (→ Goals)
- Which staff need or could benefit (→ Targeting)
- Key coach qualifications (→ Staffing)
- How long it takes to change practice (→ Duration)

INPUTS, RESOURCES
Internal supports
- Logistics (e.g., location)
- Staffing
- Supervision

External supports
- OHS
- HS National Centers
- T/TA Network
- NAEC
- Coach trainers

Structure
- Coaches
- Resources & materials
- Space
- Technology

Process
1. Identify staff needs
   - Assess needs
   - Decide content
   - Develop goals
   - Outline action steps
2. Observe practices
   - Model(s)
   - Frequency
3. Reflection, feedback
   - Mode(s)
   - Strategies
   - Frequency
   - Materials & tools
   - Coach role(s)

COACHING APPROACH
Dosage
1. Time spent on coaching processes
   - Discussing needs
   - Observing practices
   - Reflecting/providing feedback
2. Time spent on each topic

Outputs
Staff-coach relationship
- Openness to self-improvement
- Engagement and effort
- Coachability
- Satisfaction with coaching

TARGETED OUTCOMES
1. Improve staff knowledge, skills, and strategies pertaining to, for example:
   - Child development
   - Pedagogy and instruction
   - Managing child behavior
   - Classroom operations
   - Conducting assessments
   - Use of assessment data
   - Teaching parenting skills
   - Interacting with and supporting families
2. Improve quality of classroom
3. Foster staff professional development:
   - Enroll in and complete education
   - Attain certifications and degrees

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES
Child outcomes
- Language, literacy
- Cognition, general knowledge
- Health, physical development
- Social & emotional development
- Approaches to learning

Family outcomes
- Parents' positive support of their children’s learning and development
- Progress on family self-sufficiency goals (such as education, employment)

PROGRAM CONTEXT: Characteristics of staff, teaching environment, and organization (staff turnover, culture/climate, values, priorities, support for and history of quality improvements, emphasis on performance monitoring)

COMMUNITY CONTEXT: Characteristics of child, family, and community

Evaluation Theory of Change

- Theory of Change: How Early Childhood Curriculum and Teacher Training Influences on Child Outcomes

Problem Define, Solution Suggested and Theory of Change Developed -- its Time To Evaluate!

- Process Evaluations
- Impact Evaluations
- Cost Effectiveness Evaluations
Research Questions Arise from Theory of Change

RQ1. Do children who attend schools that adopt curriculum exhibit better primary school academic and behavioral outcomes than children in control schools?

RQ2. Do teachers in schools that adopt curriculum exhibit higher quality instruction than those in control schools?

RQ3. Is the curriculum implemented as intended in terms of dosage, sequencing, and quality?

RQ4. What are the monetary costs of implementing the curriculum, and how do those costs related to the level of impact?

Doing the Work: Transformation Journey to Support Young Children

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

― Maya Angelou
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THANK YOU