

Let's Discuss - *Evaluation*

Written & developed by Christine Cross & Sandy Morton Consultancy

What is the purpose of evaluation?

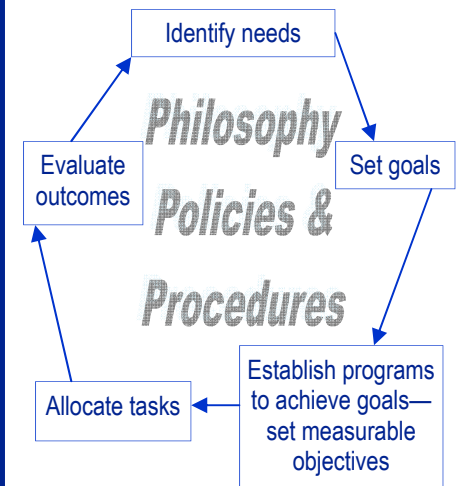
- To determine whether the service's philosophy and goals are being achieved
- To determine how effectively the service is meeting the needs of all stakeholders
- To determine how effectively the service is provided in terms of cost, time and energy
- To determine the services strengths and weaknesses so that future plans can focus on strengths and work towards improving weaknesses

It is important to involve all of your key stakeholders in centre evaluations as each group of people will have their own perspectives and priorities. Once you have identified the needs and perspectives of all your stakeholders you will then be able to negotiate and devise strategies that will suit all involved.

Methods of evaluation include:

- **Questionnaires and surveys**—need to cater for various communication styles of stakeholders (i.e. non-English speaking; literacy difficulties etc.)
- **Satisfaction cards**—simple tick box survey
- **Interviews**—can ask specific questions, clarify responses; seek further information
- **Informal discussions**—evaluation becomes a continual part of the day to day communication strategy
- **Meetings—focus groups**—allows for sharing of ideas within a structured format
- **Suggestion boxes**—allows for anonymity; is readily accessible
- **Communications books**—provides opportunities for feedback within the busy centre routines
- **Telephone discussions**—can take place when the children are not there, or when less busy
- **Checklists**—readily available for quick responses
- **Feedback boards**—can read other stakeholder's feedback which can generate further responses and ideas
- **Records**—provide statistics, on-going trends
- **Unsolicited feedback**—encourage and value complaints as an opportunity to improve your service

Evaluation is an integral part of the Planning Cycle



Key Questions to Ask

1. What do we want to achieve?
2. Did we achieve our goals?
3. Were our goals appropriate?
4. Did we revise our goals along the way?
5. Did we encounter any problems?

Evaluations should occur:

- Spontaneously
- In relation to specific activities, events or experiences
- Daily / weekly
- As part of an annual review
- Continually as a reflection on programs and practices within the service
- In response to problems or issues
- As a regular communication tool
- When change occurs
- When policies are reviewed
- At strategic times during the year

**Continuing Improvement
is a process of on-going
evaluation & review**



Consultancy

achieving quality with integrity

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POLICY & PHILOSOPHY REVIEW

Dates are set for the review of all policies and centre philosophy. All stakeholders are consulted within the review process.

PROFESSIONALISM

The venue is well organised with clear signs; appropriate storage of private records; clean and tidy.

V

The service creates a welcoming and professional first impression to families; and is bright and appealing to children.

Staff are friendly & professional on the phone.

Staff dress standards present an appropriate image.

PROGRAM

The program reflects centre philosophy.

The program responds to children 's needs and interests.

Excursions are value for money.

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Displays and children 's work are presented well.

The program changes to meet children 's growing needs.

Families, children & staff contribute to program evaluation.

Children are seen to enjoy the program activities.

L

SAFETY & HEALTH

Medications are stored and administered safely.

Chemicals and dangerous products are stored and used safely.

All potential hazards are identified and risks are managed.

Staff are well prepared for emergencies and accidents.

Risk assessment is completed for all excursions.

U

All staff are aware of the centre 's infection control procedures.

Children are supervised at all times and their protection, health and safety is assured (as well as ensuring children are happy).

Children are transported safely.

A

FOOD HANDLING & NUTRITION

All staff implement high standards of hygiene based on recognised health & safety advice when handling food.

Centre staff plan menus that are consistent with a nutrition policy that is based on advice from recognised nutrition authorities.

Children with allergies are supported.

Food is stored safely.

Children are encouraged to follow good food handling & hygiene practices.

T

STAFF SATISFACTION

All new staff are fully oriented to the service.

The staff handbook is regularly reviewed and updated.

All staff participate in training, PD and the staff appraisal process.

Staff members support each other and work well together.

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Key Principles for seeking evaluation

- Accept feedback
- Seek opinions willingly
- Listen openly
- Acknowledge suggestions
- Take comments on board

Obstacles

- Lack of planning
- Unrealistic goals
- Shortage of resources
- Lack of time
- Disagreement between players
- Resistance from staff
- Lack of participation from parents
- Fear of change

Presenting Findings

Ask yourself:

- Who is interested
- Why they need the information
- When they need it
- What they will do with it

Findings can be presented:

- In a newsletter, flier or letter
- At a meeting
- Through a display
- In a report or centre brochure
- At a social event

Evaluations guide future

directions through:

- Assessing the quality of programs
- Determining where improvements can be made
- Planning to implement improvements
- Regular reassessment of strengths and weaknesses

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