Program Evaluation: 10 Steps for Evaluating Fatherhood Programs

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Child Trends
Main Points of Discussion

- Understand **what** is an evaluation
- Understand **why** conduct an evaluation
- Understand **types** of evaluation
- Identify **10 concrete steps** for evaluating fatherhood program
What is Program Evaluation?

Program Evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about a program.
Types of Evaluations

- Evaluation is divided into two areas:
  - *Process evaluations* assess whether intervention/program model implemented as planned, whether intended target population reached, major challenges/facilitators to program implementation.
  - *Outcome evaluations* determine whether and extent expected changes in fathers or families occur and whether changes due to program or its activities.
Common Concerns About Evaluation

- Evaluation diverts resources away from program
- Evaluation is a burden on program staff
- Evaluation is complicated
- Evaluation may produce negative results
- Evaluation is just another form of program monitoring
Why Conduct an Evaluation?

- A program evaluation can…
  - Find out “what works” and “what does not work”
  - Showcase effectiveness of your program to community and funders
  - Improve your staff’s frontline practice with program participants
  - Increase program’s capacity to conduct self assessment and plan for future
  - Build knowledge for fatherhood field
Ten Steps For Evaluating Your Program

• **Step 1**: Decide what want to evaluate
• **Step 2**: Choose/assemble evaluation team
• **Step 3**: Prepare for evaluation
• **Step 4**: Develop evaluation plan with evaluator
• **Step 5**: Develop/revisit logic model with evaluator
Ten Steps For Evaluating Your Program

• **Step 6:** Seek IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval with help of your evaluator

• **Step 7:** Collect information for your evaluation

• **Step 8:** Analyze data and make sense of information collected

• **Step 9:** Present findings

• **Step 10:** Use findings to improve fatherhood program services
Step 1: Decide what you want to evaluate

- When deciding what to evaluate, consider following:
  - Scope and size of program
  - Available financial resources
  - Available staff resources
  - Funder priorities
  - Newness of program
Step 2: Choose/assemble evaluation team

- 5 Steps for selecting evaluator:
  - Assign project manager and steering committee to develop plan
  - Decide whether to use internal evaluator or hire external evaluator
  - Advertise to potential evaluators
  - Create criteria to assess and choose most qualified evaluator
  - Evaluate proposals and select evaluator
Internal versus External Evaluator?

- **Internal evaluator:**
  - *Advantages:* Least expensive; detailed knowledge of program; involvement of program staff; builds capacity for future evaluations.
  - *Disadvantages:* Lack of experience; less objectivity; draws on limited personnel; may inhibit participant honesty; confidentiality; lack of credibility.

- **External evaluator:**
  - *Advantages:* More objectivity; technical expertise; new perspective; fresh insights; more efficient; greater credibility.
  - *Disadvantages:* More expensive; lack of knowledge about program; less involvement of program staff.

- **Cost:** External evaluations range from 10% to 20% of a program’s budget.
Step 3: Prepare for evaluation

- Attain buy-in from key stakeholders
- Define roles and responsibilities for developing plan and carrying out evaluation
- Develop collaborative environment between program staff and evaluation staff
Step 4: Develop evaluation plan with your evaluator

- Your evaluation plan should include:
  - Program or Logic Model
  - Process Evaluation Questions
  - Outcome Evaluation Questions
  - Data collection methodology
  - Procedures for managing and monitoring evaluation
Step 5: Develop/revisit logic model with evaluator

- *Logic models*: Tools for designing, planning, implementing, evaluating programs. Visual representations of how program supposed to work to create outcomes for fathers.

- Logic models include: *Inputs, Program activities, Outputs, and Outcomes*.

- Logic models help:
  - Set up path to success
  - Provide map how to achieve program goals
  - Assist in planning evaluation
  - Stimulate clear thinking, preparation, organization
  - Facilitate collaboration
  - Assure everyone on same page
**Step 6: Seek IRB approval**

- **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** Group of people who review and monitor research designed to obtain information from or about human subjects
- **Purpose:** Ensure necessary steps taken to protect participants’ privacy, confidentiality, welfare, rights, privileges
- **Types:**
  - *Local IRB:* affiliated with program
  - *Commercial IRB:* not affiliated with program; independently paid to review research
- If your program does not have local IRB and you plan to collect confidential data from fathers for research, work with your evaluator to contract with an independent IRB
Step 6

When Working with an IRB:

– Form working group that represents staff and Board members,
– Decide if IRB is needed for particular project,
– Prepare documents for IRB review,
– Select IRB with experience in social science research.
Step 7: Collect information for your evaluation

- Process evaluation may involve several activities:
  - Examination of father enrollment forms
  - Tracking Attendance/Retention
  - Analysis of MIS data on fathers
  - Focus Groups with Fatherhood Program Staff
  - Focus Group with Fathers
  - In-person Interviews with Fatherhood Program Staff
  - Father Satisfaction Surveys
  - Interviews with non-participating fathers (those who drop out of program)

- Outcomes evaluation may involve:
  - Pre-/post-test surveys for participants
Step 8: Analyze data and make sense of information collected

- Process Evaluation
  - Were implementation objectives achieved? Why or why not?
- Outcomes Evaluation
  - Did the expected changes occur for program participants?
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Use logic model as tool for making sense of data
- Lessons Learned
Step 9: Present findings and report what you have learned

- Evaluation reports serve several purposes:
  - Tells “story” of your program
  - Advocates for program with potential funders, community partners
  - Contributes to evidence-base in field of fatherhood
- Critical to report negative findings as well as positive findings
- Know your audience!
- Disseminating results
Step 10: Use findings to improve program services

• *Evaluation is not a one time thing! It’s an ongoing process that should benefit program and participants.*
• Evaluation useful for program improvement:
  – *Create formal mechanisms for continuous feedback loop.* (e.g., sharing administrative data regularly; sharing evaluation data in staff meetings; one or one supervision with staff)
  – *Share outcome data with staff* so they know what is/is not working; ask for input; help *use data to drive service planning*
  – *Share outcome data with program participants* – seek input!
  – *Monitor program changes* and assess related changes in father outcomes. Continuous process for all programs.
  – *Create tools for data driven decision-making at the administrative levels*
Questions and Contact Info

• For questions and further information:

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Eight (8) OFA Evaluation Expectations

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I. Provide a narrative addressing how the conduct of the project and the results of the project will be evaluated.
II. State how you will determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives.
III. State how you will determine the extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project.
IV. Discuss the criteria to be used to evaluate results.
V. Explain the methodology that will be used to determine if the needs identified and discussed are being met.
VI. Explain how the project results and benefits are being achieved.
VII. Define the procedures to be employed to determine whether the project is being conducted in a manner consistent with the work plan presented.
VIII. Discuss the impact of the project’s various activities that address the project’s effectiveness.
I. Briefly describe your program, and how you planned to evaluated it.

II. How did you determine your project achieved its objectives?

III. How did you determine the program influenced outcomes? What does your logic model say?

IV. What is the criteria you used for being in this evaluation? Who gets to be a part of the program, and why? Which services are specific to your grant? What are the criteria to be included?
V. What method or methods did you use to collect your information and perform your evaluation?

VI. What were your project results? (Your logic model and description of your program should sufficiently explain what the benefits are, but maybe there are other benefits you can describe!)

VII. How did you monitor your program activities to ensure people were doing what you said they would do?

VIII. How did all of the components of your program contribute to getting you to your final objective?