CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Growth. Advancement. Impact.

IECMHC Evaluation Plan
WORKSHEET

THE INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO WRITING AN EVALUATION PLAN

This document outlines the elements of a comprehensive IECMHC evaluation plan.

Teams may write an evaluation plan as they design their own evaluations and seek funding for it, or they may request written evaluation plans if employing an external evaluator.

This outline is intended to be used as a resource for teams seeking to understand what to include in a written evaluation plan. It is not strict guidance; rather it provides a starting point that teams may adapt to suit their goals.

Ultimately, the goal is to gain clarity and group agreement on the key questions to be answered, the methods to be used to answer them, and the resources that will be dedicated to the undertaking.

CONTENTS

PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of the document

A. HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW

Write a high-level overview of the key information in the document, including brief description of the program to be evaluated and evaluation methods.

B. SUMMARY TABLE

Consider using a table to summarize the links between evaluation questions/goals, measures, respondents, etc. List the key links below.

PART 2: PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Description of the program being evaluated

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Write a brief description of the program. Consider describing each of the following:

1. **Purpose:** the goal of the program you are evaluating

2. **Activities:** the specific activities of the program

3. **Staff:** the individuals carrying out the activities of the program and their identities in relation to the program participants

4. **Target population:** the recipients of the program and their identities

5. **Evidence base:** scholarly literature reporting evidence for this program's effectiveness; describe the methods and findings

B. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION/SETTING

Write a description of local implementation/setting. Provide information about the key decision points (below) for implementing the program in a particular location or setting.
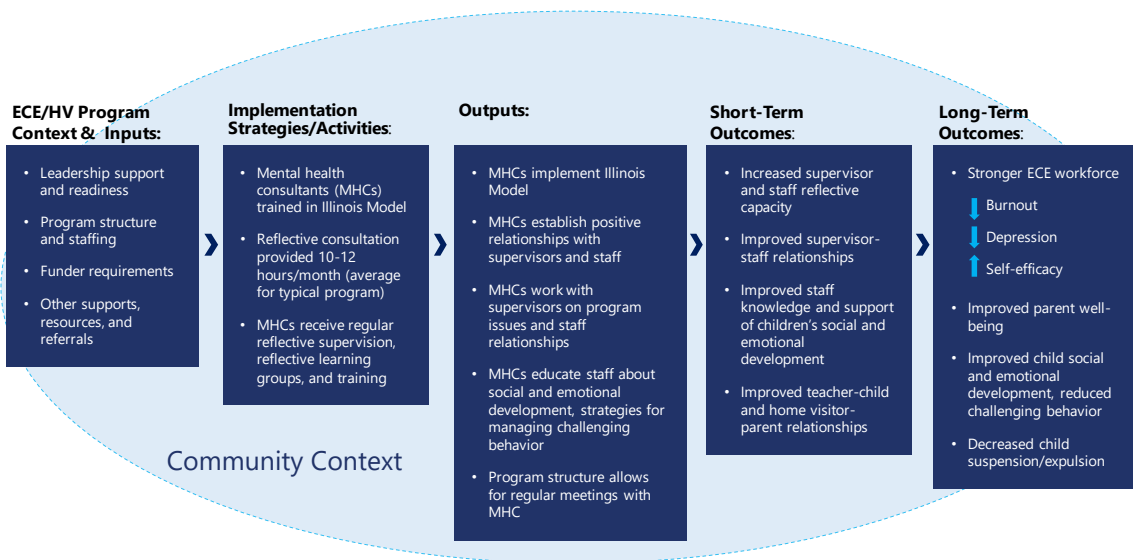
6. **Local context:** the setting for the program, which may include demographics, important events/political happenings, and background information on various stakeholders

7. **Funding:** the funder(s) of a program may specify evaluation requirements and are a program stakeholder. It is also important to name the funder(s) in reports for the sake of transparency.

8. **Scope:** the size of the program as defined by the region served, number of individuals served, intensity/durations, etc.

9. **Theory of change:** a verbal or visual depiction of the "how" behind the program's goals; based on prior literature and experiences, hypothesizing the relationship between the activities and outcomes. Note: this is different from a logic model.

10. Include any data supporting the effectiveness of this local implementation of the program, highlighting any lessons learned. If data have not yet been collected or analyzed, describe research findings or theories that guided the program design.

   • Use this **Searchable Evidence Database** to explore the peer-reviewed literature on IECMHC.

➡ *Proceed to the next page to write your description.*

🔍 Examples

• **Theory of Change** (Figure 1 on page 15 of *Evaluation of the Illinois Model of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Pilot*, also below)

Figure 1. Theory of Change for the Illinois IECMHC Model

ECE/HV Program Context & Inputs:	Implementation Strategies/Activities:	Outputs:	Short-Term Outcomes:	Long-Term Outcomes:
• Leadership support and readiness • Program structure and staffing • Funder requirements • Other supports, resources, and referrals	• Mental health consultants (MHCs) trained in Illinois Model • Reflective consultation provided 10-12 hours/month (average for typical program) • MHCs receive regular reflective supervision, reflective learning groups, and training	• MHCs implement Illinois Model • MHCs establish positive relationships with supervisors and staff • MHCs work with supervisors on program issues and staff relationships • MHCs educate staff about social and emotional development, strategies for managing challenging behavior • Program structure allows for regular meetings with MHC	• Increased supervisor and staff reflective capacity • Improved supervisor-staff relationships • Improved staff knowledge and support of children's social and emotional development • Improved teacher-child and home visitor-parent relationships	• Stronger ECE workforce ⬇ Burnout ⬇ Depression ⬆ Self-efficacy • Improved parent well-being • Improved child social and emotional development, reduced challenging behavior • Decreased child suspension/expulsion

Community Context

(B. Description of Local Implementation/Setting)

C. GOALS OF THE CURRENT EVALUATION

Describe how the proposed evaluation meets a need for the program.

PART 3: EVALUATION DESIGN

Methods proposed to answer your evaluation questions

A. EVALUATION APPROACH/FRAMEWORK

The chart below provides a brief overview of common evaluation approaches. It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive and most evaluations utilize a combination of several approaches. Specify your approach/ framework as you describe your design.

Evaluation Approach/Framework	Description
Participatory (Community-Based Participatory: CBP)	Actively engages the community in all stages of the evaluation; emphasizes the involvement of various community partners, particularly program participants
Utilization-focused	Based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users; considering how everything done will be useful
RE-AIM: Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance	Articulates five essential domains to assess the success of efforts to translate scientific advances into practice
Empowerment	Helps to equip program staff with the necessary skills to conduct their own evaluation and ensure that the program runs effectively
Culturally-responsive	Carefully considers the context of a program being evaluated; incorporating shared life experience and understandings to the evaluation activities

B. EVALUATION STAGES (if applicable)

Write a description of evaluation states, if applicable. Provide information about the evaluation stages (below).

1. **Pre-evaluation:** any activities that lay the foundation for the evaluation (e.g., engaging stakeholders, **creating a logic model**)

2. **Formative evaluation or process evaluation:** conducted to provide ongoing feedback that can be used to iteratively improve the quality of a program

3. **Summative evaluation or outcomes:** conducted to understand what occurred as a result of a program

➡️ *Proceed to the next page to write your description.*

🔍 Examples

- **Different Evaluation Types & Approaches** (Project logic model figure on *Learning for Sustainability*)

(B. Evaluation Stages)

C. EVALUATION QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Describe specific questions that will be addressed using data collection and analysis.

NOTE: Depending on how distinct your methods, timelines, and respondents are across your evaluation questions, you may decide to separate items D-K below into distinct sections per evaluation question.

D. EVALUATION LOGIC MODEL

Often required by funders, this is a depiction of the relationship between the evaluation's resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

E. COMMUNITY PARTNER INVOLVEMENT

Describe the intentional and ongoing incorporation of the perspectives of key informants in all stages of the evaluation. These key informants may include community members/leaders, funders, recipients of the program, policymakers, and others.

F. SAMPLE AND OTHER DATA SOURCES

Describe the individuals who provide data and/or the sources of secondary or administrative data to answer evaluation questions.

G. MEASURES

Describe the measures (tools/surveys/protocols that are utilized to provide evaluation data). Utilize a **choose and use interactive search engine** to help you plan and select measurement tools for capturing data on outcomes of IECMHC.

1. In prior research, the selected measures should have been validated for use with a similar population to the one in the proposed evaluation.

2. Ideally, the measures would be piloted with community partners or a subgroup of participants to check that it seems culturally- and contextually-relevant.

➡️ *Proceed to the next page to write your description.*

🔍 Examples

- **Description of Analytic Approaches** (pages 29–30 of *An Interdisciplinary Evaluation Report of Michigan's Childcare Expulsion Prevention (CCEP) Initiative*)

- **Measures Table** (Table 2 on page 17 of *Healthy Futures Year Five Evaluation*, also below)

TABLE 2

Outcome Measures Used in Year Five Evaluation

TOOL	WHAT IT MEASURES	COMPLETED BY	BASELINE/FOLLOW-UP
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Infant and Preschool versions	Social emotional development in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers	Teachers and parents of children who received child-specific consultation	After signed parental consent and then 3-4 months later
Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) Infant and Preschool versions	Teachers' interaction styles and behaviors (1 positive and 3 negative scales)	Consultants providing programmatic consultation in selected classrooms	At initiation of consultation services and then 3-4 months later
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	Teacher perceptions of the prevalence and severity of children's behavior problems	Teachers working in a CDC receiving consultation	Late fall of 2014 and May 2015
Observable Concerns	Concerns about children's behavioral, social, or developmental functioning	Teachers, parents, directors, consultants	Before child-specific consultation

(G. Measures)

H. PROPOSED ANALYSES

Describe the descriptive, statistical, or qualitative approaches to transform data into results.
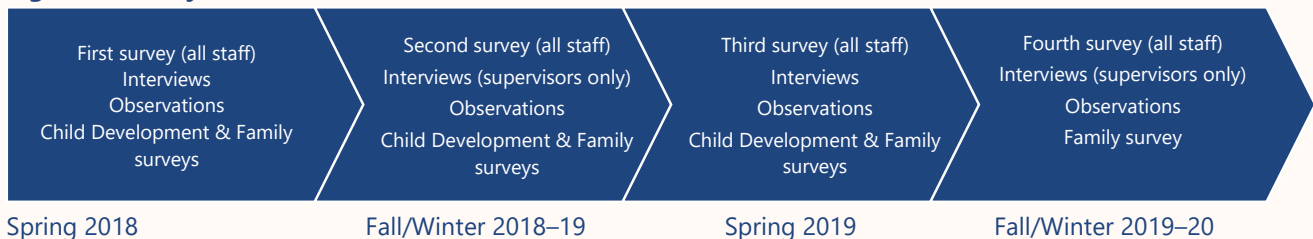
I. EVALUATION TIMELINE

Describe the timing of each step of the evaluation (charts can be helpful in visualizing this)

.

J. EVALUATION PRODUCTS

Write a description of the written documents, presentations, and other formats that will be used to communicate evaluation results. There may be different/multiple products based on intended audience(s).

K. DISSEMINATION PLAN

Describe how the evaluation products will be shared with the intended audience(s).

PART 4: EVALUATION STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Description of the pros and cons of the design choices

A. STRENGTHS OF EVALUATION DESIGN

Describe the benefits of the chosen evaluation approaches in achieving the overall evaluation goals.

B. CHALLENGES AND BIASES OF EVALUATION DESIGN

Describe any drawbacks to the evaluation design that may limit the rigor, generalizability, or relevance of the results or would make it difficult to carry out.

🔍 Examples

- **Limitations Section** (Page 29 of *Healthy Futures Year Five Evaluation*)

C. UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

Describe how the evaluation adds new knowledge for the program and the field.

PART 5: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND KEY PERSONNEL

Articulation of who will do the proposed work

A. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Describe the infrastructure that supports the evaluation team members — typically the assets they have access to through their employer(s) that support the evaluation.

B. EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS

Describe the qualifications, diversity of identities, and relevant experience of each of the evaluators.

PART 6: HUMAN SUBJECTS

Compliance with ethical standards

A. IRB

Write an ethics statement about the evaluators' intention to submit their evaluation plan to their Institutional Review Board (IRB) with details about their approaches to protecting the rights of the participants. May include description of consent, data security, etc.

PART 7: BUDGET

Costs of the evaluation

A. SUMMARY

Summarize the costs of the evaluation. Charts can be helpful in visualizing this.

B. JUSTIFICATION

Describe the rationale behind budget allocations

PART 8: REFERENCES

Sources cited in the plan

A. REFERENCES

List the sources cited in the plan.

PART 9: APPENDICES

Supplementary materials

A. APPENDICES

List categories of appendices to include. Examples: consent forms, data collection tools, interview scripts, etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS