

Strengthening Families Evaluation Work Group 10/29/13

Present: Tal Curry, Chris Duckworth, Paula Goff, Marybeth Jackson, Beth Jordan, Diana Koonce, Terry Tolan, Tena Robbins

Conference Call: Tom Lottman, Judy Schroeder

The Strengthening Families Evaluation Work Group met on October 29, 2013.

Tal gave an overview of where the Leadership Team is and what the group discussed as it related to evaluation at the last meeting. He also gave an overview of the Georgia SF team coming to Kentucky for a workshop on November 7.

Diana handed out the MIECHV/ECCS Benchmarks that we are required to report on for the ECCS grant. Through the grant requirement, we report on 2 Benchmarks at the end of year 1, 4 Benchmarks at the end of year 2 and all 6 Benchmarks at the end of the grant in year 3. The Benchmarks are as follows:

- Benchmark Area 1: Maternal and Newborn Health (percentage of infants born preterm)
- Benchmark Area 2: Child Injuries, Child Abuse, Neglect or Maltreatment and Reduction of Emergency Department Visits (rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect among children birth to age 3)
- Benchmark Area 3: School Readiness and Achievement (percentage of children who received developmental screening and did not need follow up or referral)
- Benchmark Area 4: Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (percentage of children in poverty – household income below poverty level)
- Benchmark 6: Coordination and referral for other community resources and supports (measured coordination with documented referrals between child care programs, medical homes and early intervention service providers)

Tena gave an update on the Social/Emotional Indicators feasibility study which is looking at what is available in the state. The Kentucky report is being completed by the KY SEED Committee to the SIAC and is close to being ready. This report is based on the NCCP Social/Emotional Indicator Framework. Tena also discussed how we needed to make sure that we have evaluation at multiple levels and that we need to make sure that we don't jump to the outcomes. What are the critical elements? What is the function of the Leadership Team?

Terry discussed the cause and effect data and that we should have evaluation on the initial family outcomes whether it is dosage or self-reports. She talked about using the SF self-evaluation tool in the star rating program so outcome measures go beyond benchmark measures. Need to look at outcomes at all levels. She discussed some of the key strategies in the Race to the Top grant. We would take 3 years to build out the system and have evaluation as the key strategy in year 4. Parent Cafés would begin in 2017. As we roll out the training, we need to look at both the local awareness and state level

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work. Through the GOEC, they are developing tools for messaging for parents and will add tools targeted to providers and policymakers.

There was discussion around toxic stress and the protective factors as it relates to Universal, Targeted or Intensive approaches. The group decided that we would like to have more of the universal approach; however, most of the programs represented in the Leadership Team are more targeted to at-risk populations.

The group discussed the functioning of the Leadership Team and how we should assess the cohesiveness of the group. There was discussion about having a series of benchmarks that the Leadership Team should be ready to make a commitment to working towards them. We may want to look at having several levels of leadership – a tiered leadership approach with a core planning group, partners, Leadership Team, linkages group, parent leadership, and sub-workgroups. This level of leadership could bleed into existing ECAC groups like the Community Engagement Group or the STARS workgroup. It will be important to have cross communication/linkages between groups.

The group discussed the training component. The group felt that if we embed the SF training into the partners' training that it would be more sustainable. It was also suggested that we evaluate the fidelity of the trainers.

Terry discussed her visual of how SF needs to look like a spider web. It needs to have work going on simultaneously and that we should have assessment going on as we are building capacity.

Judy discussed how Metro United Way uses a comprehensive approach to having more ASQs completed. They distribute them regionally through HANDS and First Steps. But they found out that they were not reaching the very low income. So they worked through neighborhood groups with someone to lead the groups and help with getting them connected to the ASQ. The Impact Survey showed that parents involved in the network/café found the ASQ more useful than the general population. They modeled their program after United Way's model on how to hold parent meetings and how to support parents.

Tom gave an overview of the Consortium for Resilient Young Children and how they developed their own protocol for distributing ASQ in Ohio especially through the Parent Café. They use the Dunster Trivette scale to evaluate the meaningful groups. The parents take a character strengths survey online and discuss it at the Peer to Peer café.

He also discussed the Values into Action out of University of Pennsylvania which is a classification system of strengths that lead to well-being. There are 24 signature strengths in the VIA model. There are 270 questions in the survey (<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>). Ohio is using a shorter one with families. However, they do not have a system to aggregate the data. Individual programs are struggling with what they want.

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He also discussed the DECA and DESSA measures that are utilized in programs in Northern KY. The DECA takes about 5-7 minutes and contains about 37 questions. There is an DECA Infant Toddler Version and DECA Preschool version age 2-5. The DESSA is for school age kids K-8th grade. There is a DESSA mini that has 8 questions. It is efficient tool for teachers/parents. United Way of Cincinnati is using it for all after school programs.

Tom also discussed how Nilofer said that SF is not evidence-based but it is evidence-informed. He talked about how programs or systems that align with the PF show improved outcomes. If we are looking with an evaluation focus, we can't ignore agencies' systems and theories of change - and how the theories of change links to one of the PF to what the agency is doing. Parent cafés look at parent efficacy. The Peer to Peer support social networks. You could measure how many people stayed until the end and what they learned.

In using the Theory of Change, we need to see how it relates to PF. We can't just use ASQ:SE. Each member needs to do a thorough look at what the PF their program impacts and we can't ignore the process measure. Two levels of work should go on simultaneously: 1) Program and 2) System/Process level. Tom gave an example of how he went through the Theory of Change with a group. He asked them to think about one particular person who came through their program. He wanted them to walk through the process of how this person/family receives services and how they may have changed or adapted. Through this process, they were building a "results chain" and then they could generalize this process to help build a template.

Next Steps

- Programs need to look at PF thoroughly.
- Create a menu of evaluation instruments that programs/ agencies can select. They need to be reasonable and reliable. They need to include both process and outcome measurement.
- Technical Assistance link to help create a Theory of Change framework by which to measure results. Not every program is addressing all PF but they need to know which PF each program is impacting. In order to do it successfully, the agency process should include the impact of the PF, How the agency is doing Theory of Change and what the agency needs to do to impact this change.
- May be helpful for the Leadership Team to go through the Theory of Change.