

KEY PROCEDURE #2

CONDUCTING A FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS OF AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION

Conducting a Family Impact Analysis of an Agency or Organization Using a Quantitative Checklist Supplemented with Stakeholder Discussion

Family impact analyses were conducted in six Wisconsin middle schools using the Family/School Partnership Checklist. The process involved identifying the stakeholders, planning the meeting process, conducting a family impact analysis, and developing an action plan.

Identifying the stakeholders. Each school identified 25 to 30 stakeholders to complete the checklist and participate in the planning process. Stakeholders included parents or caretakers, teachers, administrative staff, principals, students, PTA/PTO members, coaches or extracurricular leaders, school board members, guidance counselors, library staff, school volunteers, community leaders, custodial/maintenance staff, along with members of strategic planning committees, site councils, and school improvement planning groups.

To obtain a thorough and comprehensive assessment that has credibility with the community, the team of stakeholders represented the diversity of the agency or organization. For example, in the middle school family impact analysis, stakeholders represented:

- the economic, educational, racial, and cultural diversity of the school, neighborhood, and community;
- the different viewpoints that existed in the school and community;
- each of the feeder elementary schools;
- newcomers to the community as well as long-term community residents; and
- demographic diversity such as men and women, young and old, single and married, etc.

Planning the meeting process. Meetings were scheduled with the stakeholder team. Stakeholders were asked to complete the evidence-based, Family/School Partnership Checklist before the meeting for conducting the family impact analysis. During the meeting, the 25 or 30 people on the stakeholder team were broken down into four or five subgroups. These subgroups were assigned different sections of the family impact checklist. It is important to carefully select the subgroups to ensure that people with the necessary information to

complete the questions are in the subgroup. For example, the subgroup completing the portion of the assessment dealing with school/home communication consisted of a principal, administrative office staff, parents, teachers, students, coaches, and extracurricular leaders.

The goal of the small group session was for each subgroup to come to an agreement on each of the items assigned to them. This process involved discussion, and sharing of each individual's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives.

Conducting the family impact analysis. After each subgroup reached consensus, the entire group reconvened as a large group to discuss each item of the assessment tool. Each subgroup selected a leader to record and report the group's responses on each item. As each subgroup reported, all stakeholders paid attention to see if they disagreed on any item. At this point, the large group discussed any potential changes, thereby providing everyone with an opportunity to give input on each item. After the meeting, a summary of the family impact analysis was prepared, indicating how the school supported families and what gaps existed. This provided stakeholders with a complete and concise look at what the school was doing well and which areas needed improvement.

Next, stakeholders broke into three groups of equal size and brainstormed strategies to address the shortcomings so that the middle school could better support and strengthen families. Specifically, stakeholders identified strategies for making the school more family-friendly. Once each group finished brainstorming involvement strategies, the members voted confidentially on their top three choices (if less than 25 ideas) or top five choices (if more than 25 ideas).

The small groups reported their top three strategies to the large group. Members of the large group then voted confidentially on their top three choices. The resulting top three strategies became the priorities for actions intended to make the school, agency, or organization more family-friendly.

Developing an action plan. Finally, stakeholders developed concrete action plans to implement the strategies they selected for their school. It is important that the action plans have clear goals, are comprehensive, address potential pitfalls of implementation, and detail how to evaluate and monitor the implementation progress.

Note. Reprinted from *The Family Impact Handbook: How to View Policy and Program Through the Family Impact Lens* (p. 22), by K. Bogenschneider, O. Little, T. Ooms, S. Benning, and K. Cadigan, 2012, Madison, WI: Family Impact Institute. Copyright 2012 by the Family Impact Institute. Reprinted with permission.