

KEY PROCEDURE #3

TEN TIPS FOR CONDUCTING FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS

Ten Tips for Conducting Family Impact Analysis

- (1) Include the appropriate members on the family impact team—experts in family science; experts on the specific policy, program, or agency; and experts familiar with family impact analysis and the theory and practices in the *Handbook* (Bogenschneider et al., 2012a) and accompanying *Rationale* (Bogenschneider et al., 2012b).
- (2) Family impact analysts must be aware of the complexity and diversity of contemporary families to be able to accurately assess impacts for various family types and particular family functions at different points in the lifespan.
- (3) Family impact analysis is often difficult to conduct if family data are unavailable. Sometimes data need to be collected before a family impact analysis can be completed.
- (4) When possible, data on cost effectiveness and political feasibility should be collected and taken into account in the analysis.
- (5) Attention should be paid to each step of the procedure for conducting a family impact analysis. Skipping a step can threaten the integrity and usefulness of the results.
- (6) Depending on the issue, the principles may conflict with each other. The decision about which principle(s) or question(s) to value more highly should be left to decision-makers (e.g., policymakers, program administrators, boards of directors, key stakeholders, etc.).
- (7) The analysis should note the daunting prospect that decision-makers face in factoring in family impacts along with competing priorities and other policy levers such as economic and political considerations.
- (8) The family impact analysis is meant to be nonpartisan. The intent is not to end up supporting or opposing a policy, program, agency, or organization. Instead, the goal is to raise several, often conflicting, considerations that policymakers and professionals may want to weigh and factor into policy and program design, deliberations, and decisions.
- (9) In analyzing the data and presenting the results, keep in mind that family impact analysis has the potential to build broad, bipartisan consensus. To do so, the analysis must be a high-quality, rigorous examination that clearly and fairly presents ways that families are and are not supported. Instead of making recommendations, the analysis should include implications for those responsible for making program and policy decisions.
- (10) The purpose of the family impact analysis is not to plan for the sake of *planning*, but rather to plan for the sake of *acting*. To move from analysis to action, be sure to develop next steps for discussing and disseminating the results and, when possible, for evaluating the implementation and impact of any actions undertaken.

Note. Adapted from *The Family Impact Handbook: How to View Policy and Program Through the Family Impact Lens* (p. 24), by K. Bogenschneider, O. Little, T. Ooms, S. Benning, and K. Cadigan, 2012a, Madison, WI: Family Impact Institute. Copyright 2012 by the Family Impact Institute. Adapted with permission.