

THE FAMILY IMPACT HANDBOOK

HOW TO VIEW POLICY & PRACTICE THROUGH THE FAMILY IMPACT LENS

By

Karen Bogenschneider, Olivia Little,
Theodora Ooms,
Sara Benning, and Karen Cadigan



The Family Impact Institute

Family Impact Institute
Nancy Nicholas Hall
1300 Linden Drive, Room 4109
Madison, WI 53706

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The Family Impact Institute welcomes reactions to this report from readers in order to help us prepare a revised edition. Please send your comments on how useful you find it and how it can be improved to Karen Bogenschneider, Director, Family Impact Institute, Nancy Nicholas Hall, 1300 Linden Drive, Room 4109, Madison, WI 53706. You can also email kpbogens@wisc.edu.

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Karen Bogenschneider and Olivia Little
Family Impact Institute

Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Extension/Cooperative Extension

Theodora Ooms
National Healthy Marriage Resource Center

Sara Benning and Karen Cadigan
Children, Youth & Family Consortium
University of Minnesota

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INTRODUCTION

Most policymakers would not think of passing a law without first asking, “**What’s the economic impact?**” The family impact lens encourages policymakers and professionals to routinely ask a similar question, “**What is the impact of this policy, program, or practice for families?**” When economic questions arise, it is almost axiomatic to consult economists for economic data and research to assess the impact of the proposed action on selected aspects of the economy. Similarly, when family questions arise, policymakers and professionals should turn to family scientists for family data and research upon which to base an assessment of the effects of the proposed action on family roles, structure, and functioning.

The conundrum we face is this: How can we encourage policymakers and professionals to view policy and practice through the family impact lens rather than through the lens of individuals in the family? We detail in the companion paper, the *Family Impact Rationale*, how we can act on the growing body of evidence that families should be an explicit criterion for making decisions. What tools, tips, and examples are available to operationalize family support and, in so doing, place families front and center in how we do policy and practice?

The family impact lens encourages policymakers and professionals to routinely ask, “What is the impact of this policy, program, or practice for families?”

Photo courtesy of Jeff Miller/UW-Madison.



Approaching policy and practice through the family impact lens has the potential to strengthen and support families in all their diversity across the lifespan.

This handbook begins to address this conundrum. Approaching policy and practice through the family impact lens has the potential to strengthen and support families in all their diversity across the lifespan. The *Family Impact Handbook* provides:

- ▶ The family principles that evidence suggests are fundamental to assessing policies and programs for their support of family well-being;
 - ▶ Processes and procedures for raising the family impact discussion starters, for using the family impact checklists, and for conducting family impact analysis;
 - ▶ Case studies that apply the family impact lens using different methodologies in varied settings;
 - ▶ Tools and tips for conducting family impact analysis along with appropriate cautions; and
 - ▶ Current examples of how family impact analysis has been used to assess particular policies and programs.
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HOW CAN I APPLY THE FAMILY IMPACT LENS?

We discuss here how to view policy and practice through the family impact lens. The family impact lens can provide a wide-angle view of family support or a narrow focus on a particular policy or program.

Infusing the family impact lens into policy and practice can take a number of different forms. Five basic principles serve as the core of the family impact lens, whether operationalized as *Family Impact Discussion Starters*, *Family Impact Checklists*, or *Family Impact Analysis*. In Figure 1 (next page), we organize these three methods from the least time consuming (i.e., family impact discussion starters) to the most time- and resource-intensive (a full family impact analysis); using the family impact checklist method falls in between in terms of required time and resources. Each method uses different procedures for the singular purpose of developing policies and programs that strengthen and support diverse families across the lifespan. The methodologies vary according to the target audience, the intended use, and the available time and resources. (These methods are adapted and expanded from the earlier work of Ooms and Preister, 1988 and Gross, Bogenschneider, and Johnson, 2006.)

We begin by introducing and providing the evidence base for the *Family Impact Principles* followed by a detailed description of how each of the three methods brings the family impact lens to policies and programs. Figure 1 displays these three methods and details the resources in the *Family Impact Toolkit*—the two key definitions, the three key procedures, and the six key tools found in this *Handbook*.



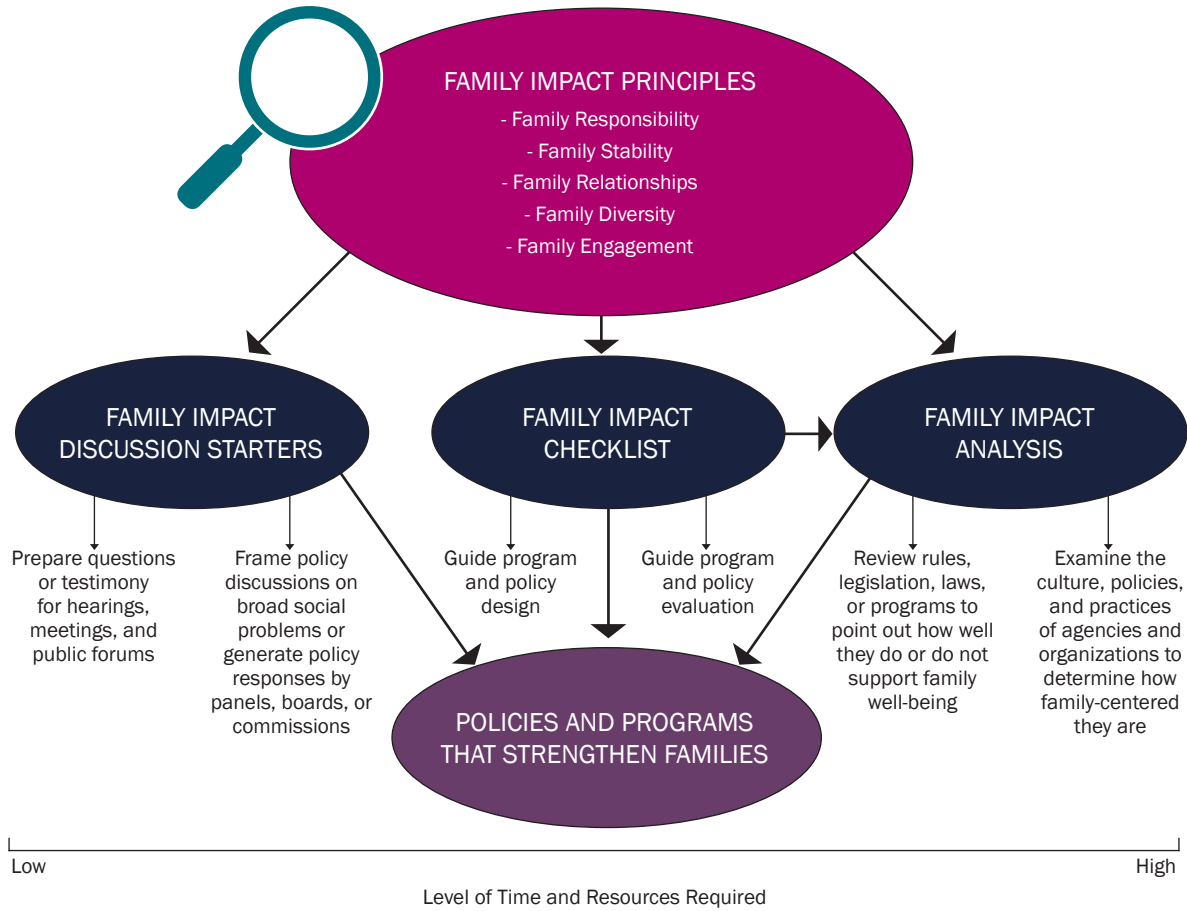
Photo courtesy of Stephanie Eddy.

A family impact lens can provide a wide-angle view of family support or a narrow focus on a particular policy or program.

THE FAMILY IMPACT PRINCIPLES

Based on a review of the latest research, we revised the family impact principles from those originally proposed (see Ooms & Preister, 1988). These evidence-based principles raise family-sensitive and policy-relevant considerations that can help strengthen family functioning. Analyzing issues through the family impact lens first involves an awareness of the many different types of families and the ways changes in family life reverberate through the major institutions of society. Family life in the U.S. today is marked by a kaleidoscope of racial/ethnic diversity, decreases in fertility, increases in life expectancy, changes in sequencing of marriage and childbearing, a rapid rise in maternal employment, an escalation in rates of cohabitation and divorce, a prolonged transition to young adulthood, etc. (e.g., Cherlin, 2010; Walsh, 2003).

Figure 1. The Family Impact Lens in Policy and Practice



FAMILY IMPACT TOOLKIT

<p><u>Key Definitions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Policy, Family Policy, and the Family Impact Lens in Policy and Practice? - What is a Family? 	<p><u>Key Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting a Family Impact Analysis of Rules, Legislation, Laws, or Programs - Conducting a Family Impact Analysis of an Agency or Organization - Tips for Conducting Family Impact Analysis 	<p><u>Key Tools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family Impact Discussion Starters - Family Impact Checklist - Family Functions and Roles - Family Functions Shared with Social Institutions - Family Diversity and Contexts - Policy and Program Implementation
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Thus, in beginning the process of applying the family impact lens, we stress the importance of first identifying *which types of families may be impacted by the policy, program, or practice*. Considerations should include different family structures and arrangements, including those who function as a family even if they are not legally recognized as such; families from different cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds, geographic locations, and socioeconomic statuses; families with members who have special needs; families of different structures; and families at different stages of the life cycle (Moore, Chalk, Vandivere, & Scarpa, 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003; Walsh, 2003).

Next, the following five principles can be used to carefully consider the intended and unintended effects of policies, programs, or practices on various family types. Note that the principles apply the family impact lens to policies or programs (i.e., *what* policies or programs are enacted or established) and also to practices (i.e., *how* policies or programs are implemented). Keep in mind that not every principle will apply to every issue. The principles are not rank-ordered, and sometimes they may conflict with one another. Depending on the issue, one principle may be more highly valued than another, requiring trade-offs. Cost-effectiveness and political feasibility must also be taken into account. Despite these complexities, the principles have proven useful across the political spectrum and have the potential to build broad, bipartisan consensus.

- ▶ **Principle 1: Family responsibility.** To promote family well-being and self-sufficiency, policy and practice should be aimed at supporting the functions of families—family formation, partner relationships, economic support, childrearing, and caregiving (Bogenschneider, Little, Ooms, Benning, Cadigan, & Corbett, 2012)—rather than unnecessarily supplanting the family’s role (Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990b; Walsh, 2002, 2003). Policy and practice can help families build their capacity to fulfill these functions and avoid taking over these responsibilities unless absolutely necessary (Berlin, 2007, 2008; Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; National Human Services Assembly, 2009; Olds et al., 1997; Olds et al., 1998). For those caring for dependent, seriously ill, or disabled family members, expectations need to be realistic taking into account family structure, resources, and life challenges (Patterson, 2002; Walsh, 2002). Policy and practice should strive to address root causes of financial responsibility and recognize family members’ need to balance work, family, and community commitments (Black & Lobo, 2008; Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008; Crosnoe & Cavanaugh, 2010; Daly, 2001; Fraenkel, 2003; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012).
- ▶ **Principle 2: Family stability.** Family instability exposes children to an array of negative developmental outcomes, disadvantages adults emotionally and economically, and contributes to growing disparities of income and opportunity (Hawkins & Ooms, 2012). Policy and practice should reinforce healthy couple, marital, parental, and family commitments (Knox, Cowan, Pape Cowan, & Bildner, 2011), recognizing that major family changes or transitions, such as aging, adoption, or divorce may be extended processes that require ongoing support and attention

To promote family well-being and self-sufficiency, policy and practice should be aimed at supporting the functions of family rather than supplanting them.

Policy and practice should acknowledge that family ties, whether positive or negative, are powerful and persistent.

(Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Leadbeater, Schellenbach, Maton, & Dodgen, 2004; Olson & Gorall, 2003). Incorporating prevention strategies can avert crises and chronic situations that can threaten family structure and functioning (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008; Patterson, 2002; Small, Cooney, & O'Connor, 2009).

- ▶ **Principle 3: Family relationships.** Policy and practice should acknowledge that family ties, whether positive or negative, are powerful and persistent (Conger et al., 2010; Knox et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2003). In healthy relationships, individuals are able to recognize and balance family members' needs for separateness and togetherness (Moore et al., 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003). Healthy families are able to maintain stability, while accommodating needed change through positive relationships (Olson & Gorall, 2003). Research demonstrates that strong communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, parenting skills, and problem-solving abilities are essential mechanisms for fostering family competence and resilience (Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990a; Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop, & Epstein, 2000; Moore et al., 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003; Patterson, 2002; Walsh, 2002).
- ▶ **Principle 4: Family diversity.** Family functioning is influenced by an array of contextual factors including culture, family structure, geographic locale, life stage, race/ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and special needs (Leadbeater et al., 2004; Moore et al., 2003). Well-documented disparities persist in education, employment, health status, and related outcomes among different racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and other marginalized groups; such groups continue to be over-represented in high-risk populations (Burton,

Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010; Olavarria, Beaulac, Belanger, Young, & Aubry, 2009). Policies and practices can have varied effects on diverse families, and should examine whether their practices create or contribute to inequitable outcomes. They should acknowledge and attempt to disentangle some of the complexities of where disparities occur and why (M. Cancian, personal communication, February 24, 2011). Racial disparities in health outcomes, for example, could stem from a number of factors including biological differences; cultural practices;

Photo courtesy of Cassandra Musser.



racial discrimination in the health care system; institutional barriers in the community such as limited access to health care or substandard housing; or some combination thereof (e.g., Williams & Jackson, 2005). These factors can affect family processes, financial stability, resource availability, and community connections, all of which can influence individual and family development (Garcia Coll, 2001; McGoldrick, 2003).



Photo courtesy of Janean Dilworth-Bart.

- ▶ **Principle 5: Family engagement.** Family-centered approaches need to be systematically identified, verified, and incorporated into organizational philosophy, culture, and practice. For example, relational practices (e.g., communicating in ways that treat families with dignity and respect) and participatory practices (e.g., involving families in ways that provide choices and input into decisions) have been shown to strengthen self-efficacy, which can directly and indirectly improve family functioning (Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2007). Policy and practice can connect families to resources such as friends; family-to-family supports; and community, neighborhood, volunteer, and faith-based organizations (Black & Lobo, 2008; Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012). Policy and practice should strive to incorporate family voices (Walsh, 2002), particularly those of marginalized families, who often are disconnected from political and planning processes and often labeled “hard-to-reach” (Greder, Brotherson, & Garasky, 2004; Winton & Crais, 1996). When family members are involved in reinforcing, supplementing, and sustaining the efforts of educators, health care professionals, and social workers, such efforts are more successful (Dunst et al., 2007).

Policy and practice should strive to incorporate family voices, particularly those of marginalized families, who often are disconnected from political and planning processes.

THE FAMILY IMPACT DISCUSSION STARTERS

The family impact discussion starters parallel the family impact principles (Key Tool #1). These discussion starters can serve to build awareness. They can also provide an organizing framework for thinking about how policies, programs, agencies, or organizations may have intended and unintended consequences for family well-being. Asking about family impact when policies are being developed, implemented, or evaluated can bring a unique perspective to policy debates or program goals by underscoring the importance of families as institutions that foster commitment to others. Not every discussion starter may be relevant for every issue and purpose.

KEY TOOL #1

FAMILY IMPACT DISCUSSION STARTERS

How will the policy, program, or practice:

- ▶ support rather than substitute for family members' responsibilities to one another?
- ▶ reinforce family members' commitment to each other and to the stability of the family unit?
- ▶ recognize the power and persistence of family ties, and promote healthy couple, marital, and parental relationships?
- ▶ acknowledge and respect the diversity of family life (e.g., different cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds; various geographic locations and socioeconomic statuses; families with members who have special needs; and families at different stages of the life cycle)?
- ▶ engage and work in partnership with families?

THE GENERAL FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLIST

The general family impact checklist that follows can be used for almost any issue and a number of purposes. Consistent with current research evidence, we have identified five new family impact principles. Each family impact principle is accompanied by a series of questions that delve more deeply into the ways in which families contribute to issues, how they are affected by them, and whether involving families would result in more effective and efficient solutions. The checklist can be used as a stand-alone tool to help design and evaluate programs and policies, or it can be used as the basis for a full-fledged family impact analysis. Examples of these varied purposes are provided in the next section.

ADDITIONAL FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLISTS

A number of specialized checklists also are available for assessing family impacts in specific settings (e.g., adolescent treatment centers, communities, and schools) and for particular policies (e.g., child and family services plans, school funding formulas, and early care and education policies). These checklists help “organize the vast, complex, and fragmented body of program information, data, and research related to families into categories and factors that have special relevance for policy and programs” (Ooms, 1995, p. 8). Each item on these checklists is evidence-based. The general idea is to acknowledge the needs of family members and involve them so they can reinforce rather than undermine the goals of the program or policy. Professionals who

(Continued on page 13)

THE FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLIST USING EVIDENCE TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

(with references)

Policymakers from across the political spectrum endorse families as a sure-fire, vote-winning strategy. Researchers have demonstrated the valuable role families play in promoting academic success, economic productivity, social competence, and so forth. Professionals who educate or deliver services to families recognize the viability of family-centered approaches for achieving program goals.

Yet family considerations are rarely addressed in the normal routines of policy and practice. Pro-family rhetoric is not enough. The Family Impact Checklist is one evidence-based strategy to help ensure that policies and programs are designed and evaluated in ways that strengthen and support families in all their diversity across the lifespan. This checklist can also be used for conducting a family impact analysis that examines the intended and unintended consequences of policies, programs, agencies, and organizations on family responsibility, family stability, and family relationships. Which types of families are affected? How are they helped or hurt? What steps can be taken to strengthen families' capacity to support their members and the contributions they make to society?

This brief guide provides a four-step overview of how to use a family impact checklist to conduct a family impact analysis. More detailed guidelines and procedures for conducting a family impact analysis are available in a handbook published by the Family Impact Institute at <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>.

USING THE CHECKLIST TO CONDUCT A FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS

1. Select the rule, legislation, law, program, agency, or organization and decide what components will be analyzed. Family impact analysis can be used to review rules, legislation, laws, or programs for their impact on families, and to evaluate the family focus and operating procedures of agencies and organizations. Court decisions, regulations, administrative practices, and implementation procedures can also be analyzed for their impact on family well-being. Family impact analysis can be a preliminary process conducted at an early stage when a policy or program is being designed, at an interim stage when a policy or program is being implemented, or at a later stage when being evaluated or reauthorized.

2. Determine which family types might be affected. Families come in many forms and configurations. In beginning the process, it is important to identify which types of families may be impacted by the policy, program, or practice.

Which types of families does or will the policy, program, or practice affect? _____

- particular family structures?
- families in a particular stage of the life cycle?
- families from particular incomes or educational levels?
- families from particular cultural, geographic, racial/ethnic, or religious backgrounds?
- families who have members with special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, physical)?
- those who function as a family even if they are not legally recognized as such?

(Cherlin, 2010; Leadbeater, Schellenbach, Maton, & Dodgen, 2004; Moore, Chalk, Vandivere, & Scarpa, 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003; Walsh, 2003)

3. Select a family impact checklist and conduct the analysis. Family impact analysis is most incisive and comprehensive when it includes expertise on (a) families, (b) family impact analysis, and (c) the specifics of the policy, program, agency, or organization. Five basic principles form the core of a family impact checklist. Each principle is accompanied by a series of evidence-based questions that delve deeply into the ways in which families contribute to issues, how they are affected by them, and whether involving families would result in better solutions. Not all principles and questions will apply to every topic, so it is important to select those most relevant to the issue at hand.

These questions sound simple, but they can be difficult to answer. The principles are not rank-ordered and sometimes they conflict with each other. Depending on the issue, one principle may be more highly valued than another, requiring trade-offs. Cost effectiveness and political feasibility also must be taken into account. Despite these complexities, family impact analysis has proven useful across the political spectrum and has the potential to build broad, bipartisan consensus.

4. Disseminate and apply the results. A family impact analysis seldom results in overwhelming support for or opposition to a policy or program. Instead, implications are drawn regarding how the policy or program affects specific types of families and particular family functions. Disseminating the results to policymakers and the public may generate interest in and the momentum for developing policies, programs, and practices that are more responsive to and supportive of family well-being.

FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLIST

Principle 1. Family responsibility. Policies and programs should aim to support and empower the functions that families perform for society—family formation, partner relationships, economic support, childrearing, and caregiving. Substituting for the functioning of families should come only as a last resort.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families build the capacity to fulfill their functions and avoid taking over family responsibilities unless absolutely necessary? (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; National Human Services Assembly, 2009; Olds et al., 1997; Olds et al., 1998; Walsh, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	set realistic expectations for families to assume financial and/or caregiving responsibilities for dependent, seriously ill, or frail family members depending on their family structure, resources, and life challenges? (Patterson, 2002; Walsh, 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	address root causes of financial insecurity such as high child support debt, low literacy, low wages, and unemployment? (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	affect the ability of families to balance time commitments to work, family, and community? (Black & Lobo, 2008; Crosnoe & Cavanaugh, 2010; Daly, 2001; Fraenkel, 2003)

Principle 2. Family stability. Whenever possible, policies and programs should encourage and reinforce couple, marital, parental, and family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved. Intervention in family membership and living arrangements is usually justified only to protect family members from serious harm or at the request of the family itself.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	strengthen commitment to couple, marital, parental, and family obligations, and allocate resources to help keep the marriage or family together when this is the appropriate goal? (Knox, Cowan, Pape Cowan, & Bildner, 2011)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families avoid problems before they become serious crises or chronic situations that erode family structure and function? (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008; Patterson, 2002; Small, Cooney, & O'Connor, 2009)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	balance the safety and well-being of individuals with the rights and responsibilities of other family members and the integrity of the family as a whole? (McCroskey, 2001)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide clear and reasonable guidelines for when nonfamily members are permitted to intervene and make decisions on behalf of the family (e.g., removal of a child or adult from the family)? (McCroskey, 2001; Walsh, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families maintain regular routines when undergoing stressful conditions or at times of transition? (Fiese et al., 2002; Moore et al., 2003; Patterson, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize that major changes in family relationships such as aging, divorce, or adoption are processes that extend over time and require continuing support and attention? (Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Leadbeater et al., 2004; Olson & Gorall, 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide support to all types of families involved in the issue (e.g., for adoption, consider adoptive, birth, and foster parents; for remarried families, consider birth parents, stepparents, residential and nonresidential parents, etc.)? (Ittig, 2004)

Principle 3. Family relationships. Policies and programs must recognize the strength and persistence of family ties, whether positive or negative, and seek to create and sustain strong couple, marital, and parental relationships.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize that individuals' development and well-being are profoundly affected by the quality of their relationships with close family members and family members' relationships with each other? (Conger et al., 2010; Cowan & Cowan, 2003; Knox et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	involve couples, immediate family members, and extended family when appropriate in working to resolve problems, with a focus on improving family relationships? (Affronti & Levison-Johnson, 2009; Conger & Conger, 2002; Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; Knox et al., 2011; O'Farrell & Fals-Stewart, 2000; Proulx & Snyder, 2009; Spoth, Guyll, & Day, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	assess and balance the competing needs, rights, and interests of various family members? (Olson & Gorall, 2003; Patterson, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	take steps to prevent family abuse, violence, or neglect? (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008; Horton, 2003; Trickett, Kurtz, & Pizzigati, 2004)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge how interventions and life events can affect family dynamics and, when appropriate, support the need for balancing change and stability in family roles, rules, and leadership depending upon individual expectations, cultural norms, family stress, and stage of family life? (Black & Lobo, 2008; Cowan & Cowan, 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003; Patterson, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide the knowledge, communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and problem-solving abilities needed for healthy couple, marital, parental, and family relationships or link families to information and education sources? (Black & Lobo, 2008; Moore et al., 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003; Patterson, 2002; Proulx & Snyder, 2009; Walsh, 2003)

Principle 4. Family diversity. Policies and programs can have varied effects on different types of families. Policies and programs must acknowledge and respect the diversity of family life and not discriminate against or penalize families solely based on their cultural, racial, or ethnic background; economic situation; family structure; geographic locale; presence of special needs; religious affiliation; or stage of life.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	identify and respect the different attitudes, behaviors, and values of families from various stages of life; family structures; and cultural, economic, geographic, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds? (Bryant et al., 2010; Garcia Coll, 2001; Greder & Allen, 2007; McGoldrick, 2003; Olson & Gorall, 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	respect cultural and religious routines and rituals observed by families within the confines of the law? (Fiese et al., 2002; Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Jones-Sanpei, Day, & Holmes, 2009)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize the complexity and responsibilities involved in caring for and coordinating services for family members with special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, physical, etc.)? (Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Rolland, 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ensure the accessibility and quality of programs and services for culturally, economically, geographically, racially/ethnically, and religiously diverse families? (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003; Williams, Lavizzo-Mourney, & Warren, 1994)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	work to ensure that operational philosophies and procedures are culturally responsive and that program staff are culturally competent? (Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d.; Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Greder & Allen, 2007; Greder, Brotherson, & Garasky, 2004; Korbin, 1997; Olavarria, Beaulac, Bélanger, Young, & Aubry, 2009)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge and try to address root causes rather than symptoms of the issue or problem (e.g., economic, institutional, political, social/psychological causes)? (Garcia Coll, 2001; Leadbeater et al., 2004)

Principle 5. Family engagement. Policies and programs must encourage partnerships between professionals and families. Organizational culture, policy, and practice should include relational and participatory practices that preserve family dignity and respect family autonomy.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide full information and a range of choices to families, recognizing that the length and intensity of services may vary according to family needs? (Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; Knox et al., 2011; Miller & Knox, 2001)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	train and encourage professionals to work in collaboration with families, to allow families to make their own decisions (within the confines of the law), and to respect their choices? (Affronti & Levison-Johnson, 2009; Brown et al., 2010; Bruns et al., 2010; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2007; Greder et al., 2004; Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990a; Patterson, 2002; Walsh, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	involve family members, particularly from marginalized families, in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation? (Brown et al., 2010; Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d.; Dunst et al, 2007; Gabovitch & Curtin, 2009; Greder et al., 2004; Winton, 2000; Winton & Crais, 1996)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	affirm and build upon the existing and potential strengths of families, even when families are challenged by adversity? (Black & Lobo, 2008; Brown et al., 2010; Bruns et al., 2010; Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d.; Knox et al., 2011; Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, & Williamson, 2004; Patterson, 2002; Walsh, 2002)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	make flexible program options available and easily accessible through co-location, coordinated application and reimbursement procedures, and collaboration across agencies, institutions, and disciplines? (Affronti & Levison-Johnson, 2009; Bronfenbrenner & Weiss, 1983; Corbett & Noyes, n.d.; Knox et al., 2011; National Human Services Assembly, 2009; Spoth & Redmond, 2000; Winton & Crais, 1996)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	establish a coordinated policy and service system that allows localities and service providers to combine resources from various, diverse funding streams? (Mendoza, 2009; National Human Services Assembly, 2009; Spoth, 2008)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge that the engagement of families, especially those with limited resources, may require emotional, informational, and instrumental supports (e.g., child care, financial stipends, transportation)? (Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; Knox et al., 2011)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	connect families to community resources and help them be responsible consumers, coordinators, and managers of these resources? (Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; Knox et al., 2011; Ooms, 1990)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	build on social supports that are essential to families' lives (e.g., friends; family-to-family support; community, neighborhood, volunteer, and faith-based organizations)? (Black & Lobo, 2008; Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Brown et al., 2010; Bruns et al., 2010; Conger & Conger, 2002; Hawkins & Ooms, 2012; Moore et al., 2003)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	consider the whole family (even if it is outside the scope of services) and recognize how family decisions and participation may depend upon competing needs of different family members? (Patterson, 2002)

use these checklists typically contemplate a greater breadth of factors and influences than they might have otherwise. These checklists are available on the website of the Family Impact Institute at <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>:

- ▶ Family/School Partnership Checklist
- ▶ A Checklist for Assessing the Family Impact of School Policy
- ▶ Evaluating School Funding Formulas Checklist: What Questions Should Legislators Ask?
- ▶ Assessing the Impact of Child Care Centers on Families
- ▶ Family-Centered Adolescent Treatment Checklist
- ▶ Family-Focused Assessment of a State’s Child and Family Services Plan
- ▶ Family Friendly Community Checklist

DIFFERENT METHODS FOR A SINGLE PURPOSE

The family impact lens uses a number of methods that may vary according to the intended audience and use, but the purpose is the same—developing programs and policies that support and strengthen families.

The family impact discussion starters can serve to build awareness and provide an organizing framework for thinking about how policies, programs, and organizations may impact family well-being. We believe using these discussion starters as a conceptual frame is more appropriate and suitable in some situations, for certain users, and at selected points of the policy process. For example, the discussion starters may be sufficient to help prepare questions or testimony for hearings, meetings, or public forums. Similarly, the discussion starters may be what are needed when a board, panel, or commission is beginning its deliberations on how to best address a broad social problem or generate potential policy responses. The initial screening provided by the discussion starters may indicate to a policymaker or professional when a full family impact analysis is needed and who should prepare it.

Family impact checklists can be used to raise family considerations. Reviewing the principles and questions can guide the design and evaluation of policies and programs by suggesting family-sensitive and policy-relevant policy and program elements. The checklist can also suggest specific impact indicators that can be incorporated into an evaluation protocol.

Photo courtesy of Olivia Little.



A full family impact analysis may be needed for a more in-depth examination of rules, legislation, laws, or programs to point out how well they do or do not address family needs. Family impact analysis may also be warranted when an agency or organization wants to conduct an assessment of its culture, policy, and practice to improve its sensitivity to and supportiveness of families. The practices and procedures for these three methods are discussed in more detail below.

Family impact discussion starters can help point out how policy goals work for or against family functioning and when further investigation is needed.

USING THE FAMILY IMPACT DISCUSSION STARTERS

The discussion starters can be used to build awareness and frame discussions on broad social issues by boards, panels, and commissions. They can also be used to generate policy responses for forums, or to prepare questions or testimony for hearings about how policy and practice may have intended and unintended consequences for families. These discussion starters can help point out how well families' needs are or are not being addressed.

For example, in a hearing on the issue of foster care policy, the family impact discussion starters could raise the importance of considering whether or not the policy offers incentives—either explicit or implicit—for others to take over family functioning when doing so may not be necessary. The family impact discussion starters would prompt questions about whether foster care policies respect the diversity of families or whether they create or contribute to inequitable outcomes.

In one specific instance, the organizers of a Family Impact Seminar in one state used questions like these to examine whether rules for program eligibility provided incentives to marry or not to marry. Policy analysts who had written lengthy reports on eligibility for state programs were quick to acknowledge that questions regarding family impact were seldom asked and not easily answered. For example, eligibility for the state's senior prescription drug program is based on federal poverty guidelines that depend on family size. For many elderly couples, it would be easier to meet the income guidelines if they live together rather than marry (Normandin & Bogenschneider, 2005). This consequence is one that policymakers probably did not intend.

Reviewing the family impact discussion starters can help point out how policy goals work for or against family functioning and when further investigation is needed.

USING THE FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLISTS TO GUIDE POLICY AND PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

Policy and program design and evaluation would benefit by consciously including family considerations in fundamental ways. For example, family impact checklists can be useful

before programs or policies are enacted to help anticipate how families may affect and be affected by the program plan or policy proposal. After a program or policy is in operation, the checklists can also identify evidence-based, family constructs that could be incorporated as criteria in impact evaluations. Even without conducting a full family impact analysis, reviewing the family impact principles and questions can raise family considerations in several ways, only three of which are mentioned here.

First, families need to be viewed as central to the design and evaluation of programs and policies whether they are aimed at individuals or families (Day, Gavazzi, Miller, & van Langeveld, 2009). The evidence for reciprocity is clear. Family functioning is related to the functioning of individuals, and the functioning of individuals is related to family functioning (Jones-Sanpei, Day, & Holmes, 2009). Even when the program or policy is directed toward an individual, the desired outcomes may be influenced by the quality of family relationships, the extent of family engagement, and the attention paid to practices and protocols that are sensitive to and responsive to family well-being (Ooms, 1995).

Second, the family impact checklists can be used to identify specific ways to incorporate family considerations into policy or program design and evaluation. For design purposes, the checklists can suggest evidence-based program components and operational practices that can support family well-being. For evaluation purposes, the checklists can help identify what data are collected, who is targeted, and which program benchmarks and outcomes to measure. For example, data can be collected on family processes (e.g., treating families with dignity and respect, and providing opportunities for input into decisions) and family outcomes (e.g., how children affect the parental relationship, how the relationship between parents affects children's well-being, etc.).

Third, even when family outcomes are targeted, they are rarely incorporated into programming or evaluation decisions in valid and reliable ways (Day et al., 2009). For example, only one individual per family is asked to provide program input or respond to survey questions without acknowledging that individuals may experience family relationships in different ways (Bogensneider & Pallock, 2008; Carr & Springer, 2010). In fact, family members often have different views even on basic questions such as whom they consider to be part of their family (Olson & Gorall, 2003). The checklist points out how differences in the context in which families operate also need to be acknowledged in designing programs and measuring impact because outcomes



Photo courtesy of Dubova (Fotolia.com).

Family functioning is related to the functioning of individuals, and the functioning of individuals is related to family functioning.



Photo courtesy of Cassandra Musser.

may be influenced by such factors as access to and availability of kin support; racial/ethnic and cultural background; socioeconomic status; and so forth.

An illustration of the usefulness of this process comes from using the checklist to identify family impacts of prisoner reentry. For example, two thirds of female inmates and one half of male inmates are parents. When one parent is incarcerated, the children left behind are at risk of unhealthy development, and all family members face financial stress along with the emotional strain of separation. When prisoners return home, the family can be central to the

reentry process. Of course, not all families have the desire or means to help. Yet in one study, 90% of former prisoners “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their family had been supportive in the first few months after their release. Former prisoners who felt that their family was supportive had more success finding a job and staying off drugs. In fact, continuing contact with family members during and following incarceration can reduce recidivism and foster reintegration (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005).

As critical as this support is, it often comes at a price for families, many of whom are fragile. For families to serve as a cornerstone of successful prisoner reentry, the checklist revealed specific ways that family needs could be taken into account. For example, policymakers could enact programs that strengthen families who, in turn, will support the returning prisoner. Policymakers could also examine the state statutes and administrative rules that may affect the ease of reentry for returning prisoners and their families (e.g., whether or not a prisoner can access food pantries or homeless shelters, obtain a driver’s license, or qualify for benefits such as Food Stamps or health care). Corrections agencies could improve visitation policies; expand the definition of *family* to allow visits by girlfriends or boyfriends who sometimes are raising the prisoner’s children; and make it easier to maintain phone, video, or Internet contact with partners or family members. Schools, youth organizations, and family-serving agencies could take into account the special challenges families face when a parent or partner enters into or returns from prison.

Family impact analysis is an in-depth method that uses a checklist to examine the extent to which rules, legislation, laws, programs, agencies, or organizations do or do not support families.

CONDUCTING FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS

Family impact analysis is a formal, in-depth methodology that uses a checklist as a tool to fully examine the extent to which rules, legislation, laws, programs, agencies, or organizations do or do not support families. Two protocols are provided for:

1. Reviewing rules, legislation, laws, or programs to point out family impacts; and

2. Evaluating the culture, policies, and practices of agencies or organizations to identify strengths and gaps in their support of families.

How to use family impact analysis to review rules, legislation, laws, or programs. The protocol for conducting a family impact analysis of rules, legislation, laws, or programs can be found in Key Procedure #1. Family impact analysis can provide useful implications for those who engage in the craft of policy and practice. Three examples are given here. First, a family impact analysis of Wisconsin Works, the state's cash assistance welfare program, revealed that the program's success tends to be measured in strictly economic terms, with evaluations rarely considering how the program affected family relationships. Furthermore, although program guidelines promote involving family members in case management and building on family strengths, it remains unclear how often or how well these provisions are implemented (Little, in press).

An examination of the Child-Parent Center, an early childhood education program in the Chicago public schools, revealed that parent involvement and family support were central to the program's mission, operation, and effectiveness. For children to be accepted into the program, parents were required to spend at least one half day per week at the Center. However, the analysis revealed a conflict between a family's childrearing and breadwinning responsibilities; the Center offered no weekend or evening hours, raising the question of whether more flexible options for parent involvement are needed for parents employed during normal school hours. Another implication extended beyond the Center to society at large, specifically whether government has a role through actions such as parental leave laws that allow time off work for parents to participate in children's schooling (Eddy, 2012).

Finally, a family impact analysis of after-school programming found that effective programs provide families with an opportunity for interactions with program staff and with other families; in so doing, after-school programs offer the potential for families to build supportive social networks. However, in after-school programs, strategies to involve families often have been implemented on an irregular basis with limited time and attention (Lee, 2012).

The family impact analyses described here can be read in their entirety on the Family Impact Institute website at <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>. In sum, all these analyses uncovered aspects of family functioning that had not been considered by the policy or program, and also revealed unanticipated ways in which families benefitted or were harmed.

How to use family impact analysis to evaluate the culture, policies, and practices of agencies or organizations. Assessing how family-centered an agency or organization is can be conducted in several ways, two of which we describe here: (a) using a qualitative process with focus groups of stakeholders; and (b) using a quantitative checklist supplemented with discussion by a group of stakeholders.



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Eddy.

Family impact analysis of an agency or organization may be conducted by stakeholders involved in the organization or by outside experts, each of which has pros and cons. Stakeholders are often committed to the assessment because they have a vested interest in seeing the organization maximize its potential and are more willing to implement the findings when they were involved in generating them. Given their intimate knowledge of the organization and its operation, they can often provide insights that are less obvious and available to outside evaluators. However, it may be more difficult for stakeholders who are

personally involved in the organization to be objective and to offer a frank and/or fresh assessment of shortcomings (even when confidentiality is guaranteed).

An analysis can also be provided by professionals with expertise in family agencies, implementation, and/or the specific services being examined. Experts can provide an outsider's view, which can be a limited or "boiler-plate" assessment without extensive effort to familiarize themselves with the details of the organization's operation, participants, and staff.

- ▶ ***Using a qualitative process with focus groups of stakeholders.*** This process was implemented in collaboration with two County Cooperative Extension educators to assess how well the operating policies and procedures of local child care centers supported families. The family impact analysis was completed in two state-licensed child care centers serving 112 and 304 children in two towns with populations of 10,000 and 15,000. The process employed a qualitative approach of gathering information through focus groups, and included the perspectives of both child care staff and parents of children enrolled in the centers.

Each extension educator partnered with a child care center director who expressed interest in assessing the extent and quality of the family-centered care they provided and to build stronger partnerships with families. The director then recruited both staff and parents to participate in focus groups of about 8 to 12 participants. Each focus group was facilitated by the extension educator and a doctoral student with separate groups held for staff and parents. Each group was asked questions (derived from the family impact principles) about how the center supports families, how their policies and practices might be challenging to families, how the center works with families, how it assists and benefits families, and how the center can help make the day-to-day lives of families better.

Participants were directed to provide specific examples and to think broadly and creatively about ways that the center could be supportive of families. Honest and open dialogue was encouraged, and confidentiality of responses was assured to all participants. In order to prompt a more complex and comprehensive discussion, at the end of each focus group, participants were given the *Assessing the Impact of Child Care Centers on Families* checklist to complete. Then participants were asked if the checklist questions raised any additional ideas, comments, or concerns.

The director was not present at any of the focus groups, but met regularly with the extension educator to coordinate the project. The director also completed surveys about family demographics and the family-friendliness of the center's operating policies and procedures.

The focus group conversations were transcribed verbatim by the extension educators, who then analyzed the transcripts for common themes and prepared a report of the findings to present to the director and staff. The report focused on ways families were well supported by the center, and areas where the center could improve its support. It also indicated areas where there were differences of opinion between the staff and parents. For example, in one center, staff felt it would be extremely beneficial for the center to provide parent education classes, whereas parents tended to feel that this would not be necessary, that they were too busy, or that they were already getting this information from conversations with the staff.

The extension educator and the director co-presented the results to the staff and engaged them in a discussion about possible next steps. An important part of this process is to follow up with the organization after three or more months, to determine whether any of the suggested actions are underway or have been completed. Any changes in policies and practices that occur can be identified through select interviews with the director, staff, and parents.

In follow-up contacts, the director of the church-affiliated center explained the value they place on continuous quality improvement and commended the family impact analysis for identifying in an in-depth way how they could strengthen their services. She also credited the effort with helping secure a vote of confidence from the congregation for a proposal that she had been working on for five years to remodel the center's basement into a more usable, multi-purpose space.



Photo courtesy of Olivia Little.

The director presented the report at the congregational meeting and some of the parents who were involved in the family impact analysis advocated on behalf of the remodeling project. For example, the new area will allow private space for talking with family members about their child's development, which 45% of staff reported in the analysis as "in need of improvement." Also, the new space will allow the capacity to offer their summer camp program all through the summer, which parents voiced as an important need. The show of support from the congregation had the side benefit of reinvigorating the center staff, making them feel more valued as professional caregivers rather than babysitters, as some of them felt they had been viewed in the past.

In follow-up six months later at the second center, several policies and procedures were changed in response to parent feedback gathered through the family impact analysis. For example, the center assigned consistent "closers" at the end of the day, so parents were dealing with familiar staff when they picked up their child. Clear communication and routines were implemented for scheduled room changes. Breakfast times were adjusted so all children could be served irrespective of their arrival times. In fact, the center was so pleased with the parent feedback that they developed monthly surveys so that they could respond to parent concerns on a real-time basis.

The focus group methodology can provide several benefits. For example, focus groups encourage participants to feed off each other's comments, usually resulting in a rich conversation that can stimulate ideas and explanations that may not emerge from a quantitative survey. Keep in mind, however, that recruitment of participants can be challenging, especially for parents with busy schedules.

- ▶ ***Using a quantitative checklist supplemented with discussion by a group of stakeholders.*** This process was developed and used in 28 Wisconsin communities for issues such as addressing parents' lack of involvement in the schooling of their middle-school-aged children. National data revealed that one-third of students report that their parents do not know how they are doing in school and one-sixth of parents don't care if they earn good grades in the following year (Steinberg, 1996).

Yet the evidence on parental school involvement is clear. When parents are involved, students get better grades, score higher on achievement tests, attend school more regularly, drop out less often, and have higher career aspirations (Steinberg, 1996). However, without special efforts, few families continue as active partners with the school during the middle school years.

County Cooperative Extension educators teamed up with a state specialist to respond to this issue using a family impact analysis of parental involvement in their child's schooling. The three-meeting process is found in Key Procedure #2.

(Continued on page 23)

KEY PROCEDURE #1

CONDUCTING A FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS OF RULES, LEGISLATION, LAWS, OR PROGRAMS

1) Select a policy or program and decide what components will be analyzed. Selecting a topic for analysis derives from one's personal expertise and experience. Another critical consideration is timing. The likelihood that a family impact analysis will be used depends, to a large extent, on whether the conditions are right for social change on the issue. For example, when a policy issue is politically and economically feasible, policymakers are willing to invest their time, energy, and political capital because their efforts may pay off (Kingdon, 2003). Assessing political feasibility and organizational readiness often entails consulting with policymakers, advocates, organizational staff, or those who track family policy.

Once the rule, legislation, law, or program is selected, decide what components to focus on in a family impact analysis. As detailed in Key Tool #6, this often entails a broad consideration of related programs or policies, relevant laws or court decisions, regulations, appropriations, administrative practices, and implementation procedures (e.g., staffing, accessibility, coordination with other programs, family-centered practices, etc.). Family impact analysis can be a preliminary process conducted at an early stage when a policy or program is being designed or launched, at an interim stage when a policy or program has been implemented, or at a later stage when being evaluated or reauthorized.

2) Determine which family types might be affected. Policies or programs may have different effects on diverse family types. Family impact analysis should consider various aspects of diversity such as family structure (e.g., birth family, adoptive family, step family, family of origin, extended family), family life stage (e.g., families with young children or elderly dependents, aging families), geographic locale (e.g., rural, suburban, and urban), heritage (e.g., specific cultural, racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds), presence of special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, and physical needs), and socioeconomic diversity (e.g., income, education, number of wage earners). Key Tool #5 presents various contexts and aspects of family diversity to consider.

3) Select a family impact checklist and conduct the analysis. The general family impact checklist can be used for almost any policy or program. In addition, there are a number of specific family impact checklists that are targeted to particular institutional settings, programs, or purposes (see <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>). After selecting the checklist, identify the principles and questions that are most appropriate for the issue at hand. Not all principles and questions will be relevant for every issue. The checklist questions sound simple, but they can be difficult to answer. The principles and questions are not rank-ordered and sometimes they conflict with each other. Depending on the issue, one principle or question may be more highly valued than another, requiring trade-offs. Cost effectiveness and political feasibility also must be taken into account.

To conduct a family impact analysis, expertise is generally needed on (a) families, (b) family impact analysis, and (c) the specifics of the policy or program. The analysis can consist of conducting an in-depth empirical study or computer simulation. Typically it is a more qualitative process of drawing from existing evidence to estimate likely consequences. Conducting the analysis may involve such tasks as collecting new data, interviewing informants, reviewing relevant research, consulting with experts, and so forth.

4) Disseminate and apply the results. A family impact analysis seldom results in overwhelming support for or opposition to a program or policy. Instead, the analysis identifies several ways in which a policy supports families and others ways it does not. After completing the analysis, policy implications can be drawn regarding the likely effects of the policy and its implementation on specific types of families and particular family functions. These implications raise issues that policymakers and practitioners may wish to take into account in their decisionmaking, and sometimes reveal conflicts between competing principles or varying impacts for different family types. These value judgments typically are made by policymakers on behalf of their constituents or by program administrators on behalf of their boards and the families they serve.

After the analysis is done, a plan should be made for disseminating the results to those policymakers or professionals who are in a position to apply them to policy and practice. The results may generate interest in and the momentum for developing policies and practices that are more responsive to and supportive of family well-being.

KEY PROCEDURE #2

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 should represent 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 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 stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked to complete the evidence-based, Family/School Partnership Checklist before the meeting for conducting the family impact analysis. During the stakeholders' meeting, it was helpful to break the 25 to 30 people 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 could consist of a principal, administrative office staff, parents, teachers, school counselors, students, coaches, and/or 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 involves 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 together 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 is being done well and which areas need 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.

The process was organized around the evidence-based Family/School Partnership Checklist, adapted from research reviews (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986) and the work of the National Network of Partnership Schools at John Hopkins University. The goal of the family impact analysis was to assess parental involvement in the school, and pinpoint strengths that were present and gaps that existed. This analysis was then used (a) to identify strategies for building stronger family-school partnerships, and (b) to develop detailed action plans to implement them.

Participants in the family impact analysis process have benefited in tangible ways. The program has increased their knowledge of the importance of parent's involvement in their child's school. In evaluations from one middle school ($N = 19$, 100% response rate), participants reported knowing more after the meetings than before about the benefits of parent involvement, the different ways parents can get involved, and how other schools have built successful family/school partnerships. On a scale of 1 (*poor*) to 5 (*excellent*), the importance of the strategies the team selected was rated 4.5 and the process for developing the action plan was rated 4.9. Every person involved in the project said that they would recommend the family impact analysis process to others.

The impacts that resulted from the family impact analysis were different in each of the six middle schools. For example, one school hired a parent volunteer coordinator. In one year's time, volunteers contributed 1,503 hours or almost 62 8-hour workdays at the school—a fivefold increase in volunteer hours. To support parents, an evidence-based, parent education program was taught at one school. Schools established parent resource rooms, created a handbook for middle school parents, and developed and distributed a directory of county services available to parents (Bogenschneider, 2006). To build connections between teachers and parents, policies were passed to require that students have the same homeroom teacher in grades 7 and 8. To help keep parents informed of classroom expectations and student responsibilities, daily assignments were posted on the school website, and teachers began sending postcards to parents when their child did something well or improved. Weekly parent newsletters were also made available on the website or in hard copy depending on parents' preferences. All these actions helped build greater parent involvement in the schooling of their child at a time of transition when it is likely to drop off—the middle school years.

(Continued on page 25)

Photo courtesy of Janean Dilworth-Bart.



10 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 practice in this *Handbook* and accompanying *Rationale*.
2. Family impact analysts must be aware of the complexity and diversity of contemporary families to be able to accurately assess whether there are varying impacts for different family types and particular family functions.
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 decisionmakers (e.g., policymakers, program administrators, boards of directors, key stakeholders, etc.).
7. The analysis should note the daunting prospect decisionmakers 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 competing, 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, nonpartisan consensus. To do so, the analysis must be a high-quality, rigorous examination of the issue 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 assessing the implementation and impact of any actions undertaken.

WHAT IS REALISTIC AND UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT FROM FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS?

The question of how family impact analysis affects families sounds simple. The process of assessing family impact, however, can be quite complex.

In a review of some of the early family impact statements conducted in Colorado and New York, Ooms concludes that the exercise was “somewhat instructive” but “the statements themselves were of limited value. They seem superficial and don’t shed much new light” (1995, p. 14). Harry McGurk, former director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, made a similar observation, concluding that the usefulness of family impact analysis was conditional, depending upon the quality of the statements (Bogenschneider, 2006).

Ooms speculates that the quality may depend upon the staff who conduct them—whether they are specially trained or have access to family experts. Even those with a strong family background have difficulty conducting a technical exercise like family impact analysis and grasping how to use the tools to analyze policies and programs in any depth (Ooms, 1995).

Operationally, the data needed to complete the analysis are sometimes unavailable. Logistically, the analysis itself may be conducted haphazardly or shortchanged by time or resource constraints. Sometimes only the general principles are considered without delving into the individual questions that can provide richer and more useful findings.

Granted, the usefulness of family impact analysis in the real world may extend beyond the analytic process itself. Australia’s Harry McGurk found that their value depended on how and if they were used in the policymaking process, and whether a system of accountability was established.

Despite all these challenges, Ooms (1995) pointed out that many participants in the family impact process still agreed that the exercise had been useful in raising their awareness of several issues that they had not thought about before.

Thus, the quality and usefulness of family impact analysis is likely to be improved by familiarizing staff and others who will be conducting the analysis with the theoretical and empirical evidence provided in the *Family Impact Rationale*, and the procedural background provided in this *Handbook*. Several tips for successful implementation are given in Key Procedure #3.

Despite our enthusiasm for family impact analysis, we are neither naïve nor sanguine. We recognize that

Photo courtesy of Jenn Seubert.



families are only one part of a vast, multi-faceted, political landscape. We do not assert that family factors affect every issue or that family approaches are always most effective (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010b).

The family impact lens should not be embraced without acknowledging appropriate cautions. In fact, the family impact lens can be myopic if it fails to keep pace with the forms, functions, and diversity of contemporary families. It can be challenging for professionals to assess family impact for diverse types of families and even more challenging for policymakers to weigh the tradeoffs when a policy advantages one family type and disadvantages another. What's more, policymakers have to face the daunting prospects of factoring family impacts into decisions along with competing priorities and other factors such as economic and political considerations.

As in most policy regimes, a good thing can be overdone. Conceivably, focusing too exclusively on families could be used as a rationale for interfering with hard-fought individual freedoms, such as women's career opportunities, equal wages, and reproductive rights. Even when judiciously applied with a clear sense of the plurality of U.S. families, adopting the family impact lens does not inexorably suggest which steps to take or what decisions to make. Two well-meaning professionals can start with what each considers the family impact lens and yet arrive at quite different conclusions about the most desirable ends and the most appropriate means to achieve those ends. Even when there is agreement on the means and ends, the spectrum of unintended and unanticipated consequences of any policy or program decision is enormous (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010a).

Professionals should also remain alert to the potential for the family impact brand to be co-opted and used to package narrow, individualistic, and self-serving agendas. *Pro-family* does mean something quite different than *pro-people* (Coalition of Family Organizations, 1989). Yet almost any side of any issue whether it is regulation or deregulation, tax cuts or tax hikes, and so forth, can be cleverly crafted as being good for families. These political exploitations of the family brand are difficult to detect, but nonetheless should be named for what they are.

In short, the family impact approach still entails the hard theoretical and normative work of any difficult policy endeavor. The fact that it is hard, however, does not mean it is not worth doing.

WHAT TOOLS AND EXAMPLES ARE AVAILABLE?

FAMILY IMPACT TOOLKIT INDEX: WHERE TO FIND KEY DEFINITIONS, KEY TOOLS, AND EXAMPLES

Key Definitions

- ▶ Key Definition #1: What is Policy, Family Policy, and the Family Impact Lens in Policy and Practice? (pg. 9 of the *Rationale*)
- ▶ Key Definition #2: What is a Family? (pg. 10 of the *Rationale*)

Key Procedures

- ▶ Key Procedure #1: Conducting a Family Impact Analysis of Bills, Legislation, Laws, or Programs (pg. 21 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Procedure #2: Conducting a Family Impact Analysis of an Agency or Organization (pg. 22 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Procedure #3: 10 Tips for Conducting Family Impact Analysis (pg. 24 of this *Handbook*)

Key Tools

- ▶ Key Tool #1: Family Impact Discussion Starters (pg. 30 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #2: Family Impact Checklist with references (pg. 9 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #2: Family Impact Checklist without references (pg. 31 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #3: Family Functions and Roles (pg. 35 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #4: Family Functions Shared with Social Institutions (pg. 36 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #5: Family Diversity and Contexts (pg. 37 of this *Handbook*)
- ▶ Key Tool #6: Policy and Program Implementation (pg. 38 of this *Handbook*)



Photo courtesy of Jenn Seubert.

Examples of Family Impact Analyses of Policies and Programs

Several family impact analyses of policies and programs are available on the Family Impact Institute website at <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>. These examples illustrate how family impact analysis can be used to identify ways in which policies advantage or disadvantage families and to draw implications for policies and programs. These analyses examine:

- ▶ After-school programs
- ▶ The Chicago Child/Parent Program
- ▶ Early childhood education quality rating systems
- ▶ Welfare programs
- ▶ The Mental Health Parity Act
- ▶ The Family and Medical Leave Act
- ▶ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ▶ Transracial Adoption and the Adoption and Safe Families Act
- ▶ Temperament-Based Parenting Program
- ▶ Home Visiting Programs
- ▶ Program for Bone Marrow Transplantation of Adults

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition, the Family Impact Institute website includes links to newsletters and briefing reports written for policymakers that discuss the importance of families to policymakers and the public as well as the value of family considerations on specific issues such as early childhood education, K-12 education, the children of incarcerated parents, and so forth.

Newsletter Articles

- ▶ Why Is Family Involvement in Education Important?
- ▶ New Study Shows Children of Incarcerated Mothers Experience Multiple Challenges
- ▶ Families High on Policymaker and Public Agendas
- ▶ Families Are Key to Curbing Health Care Costs
- ▶ Does Early Childhood Education Have Effects 15 Years Later?

Briefing Report Chapters

- ▶ A Policymaker's Guide to Effective Juvenile Justice Programs: How Important are Family Approaches?
- ▶ A Policymaker's Guide to Long-Term Care in Wisconsin: Public, Private, and Family Perspectives
- ▶ Family Involvement in Education: How Important Is It? What Can Legislators Do?
- ▶ Do We Know What Good Parenting Is? And Can Public Policy Promote It?
- ▶ Home Visitation Programs as an Early Intervention Strategy
- ▶ Reconnecting DC Families: Involving Low-Income Families in the Lives of Their Children
- ▶ A Human Development Approach to Welfare Reform Phase II: Giving Families Choice

KEY TOOL #1

FAMILY IMPACT DISCUSSION STARTERS



The family impact discussion starters parallel the family impact principles. These discussion starters can serve to build awareness and provide an organizing framework for thinking about how policies, programs, agencies, and organizations may have intended and unintended consequences for family well-being. Asking about family impact when policies and programs are being developed, implemented, or evaluated can bring a unique perspective to policy debates or program goals by underscoring the importance of families as institutions that foster commitment to others. Not every discussion starter may be relevant for every issue and purpose.

How will the policy, program, or practice:

- ▶ support rather than substitute for family members' responsibilities to one another?
- ▶ reinforce family members' commitment to each other and to the stability of the family unit?
- ▶ recognize the power and persistence of family ties, and promote healthy couple, marital, and parental relationships?
- ▶ acknowledge and respect the diversity of family life (e.g., different cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds; various geographic locations and socioeconomic statuses; families with members who have special needs; and families at different stages of the life cycle)?
- ▶ engage and work in partnership with families?

KEY TOOL #2

FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLIST: USING EVIDENCE TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

(without references)



Policymakers from across the political spectrum endorse families as a sure-fire, vote-winning strategy. Researchers have demonstrated the valuable role families play in promoting academic success, economic productivity, social competence, and so forth. Professionals who educate or deliver services to families recognize the viability of family-centered approaches for achieving program goals.

Yet family considerations are rarely addressed in the normal routines of policy and practice. Pro-family rhetoric is not enough. The Family Impact Checklist is one evidence-based strategy to help ensure that policies and programs are designed and evaluated in ways that strengthen and support families in all their diversity across the lifespan. This checklist can also be used for conducting a family impact analysis that examines the intended and unintended consequences of policies, programs, agencies, and organizations on family responsibility, family stability, and family relationships. Which types of families are affected? How are they helped or hurt? What steps can be taken to strengthen families' capacity to support their members and the contributions they make to society?

This brief guide provides a four-step overview of how to use a family impact checklist to conduct a family impact analysis. More detailed guidelines and procedures for conducting a family impact analysis are available in a handbook published by the Family Impact Institute at <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org>.

USING THE CHECKLIST TO CONDUCT A FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 1. Select the rule, legislation, law, program, agency, or organization and decide what components will be analyzed.** Family impact analysis can be used to review rules, legislation, laws, or programs for their impact on families, and to evaluate the family focus and operating procedures of agencies and organizations. Court decisions, regulations, administrative practices, and implementation procedures can also be analyzed for their impact on family well-being. Family impact analysis can be a preliminary process conducted at an early stage when a policy or program is being designed, at an interim stage when a policy or program is being implemented, or at a later stage when being evaluated or reauthorized.
- 2. Determine which family types might be affected.** Families come in many forms and configurations. In beginning the process, it is important to identify which types of families may be impacted by the policy, program, or practice.

Which types of families does or will the policy, program, or practice affect? _____

- particular family structures?
- families in a particular stage of the life cycle?
- families from particular incomes or educational levels?
- families from particular cultural, geographic, racial/ethnic, or religious backgrounds?
- families who have members with special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, physical)?
- those who function as a family even if they are not legally recognized as such?

- 3. Select a family impact checklist and conduct the analysis.** Family impact analysis is most incisive and comprehensive when it includes expertise on (a) families, (b) family impact analysis, and (c) the specifics of the policy, program, agency, or organization. Five basic principles form the core of a family impact checklist. Each principle is accompanied by a series of evidence-based questions that delve deeply into the ways in which families contribute to issues, how they are affected by them, and whether involving families would result in better solutions. Not all principles and questions will apply to every topic, so it is important to select those most relevant to the issue at hand.

These questions sound simple, but they can be difficult to answer. The principles are not rank-ordered and sometimes they conflict with each other. Depending on the issue, one principle may be more highly valued than another, requiring trade-offs. Cost effectiveness and political feasibility also must be taken into account. Despite these complexities, family impact analysis has proven useful across the political spectrum and has the potential to build broad, bipartisan consensus.

- 4. Disseminate and apply the results.** A family impact analysis seldom results in overwhelming support for or opposition to a policy or program. Instead, implications are drawn regarding how the policy or program affects specific types of families and particular family functions. Disseminating the results to policymakers and the public may generate interest in and the momentum for developing policies, programs, and practices that are more responsive to and supportive of family well-being.

FAMILY IMPACT CHECKLIST

Principle 1. Family responsibility. Policies and programs should aim to support and empower the functions that families perform for society—family formation, partner relationships, economic support, childrearing, and caregiving. Substituting for the functioning of families should come only as a last resort.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

<u>Strong</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Limited</u>	<u>N/A</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families build the capacity to fulfill their functions and avoid taking over family responsibilities unless absolutely necessary?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	set realistic expectations for families to assume financial and/or caregiving responsibilities for dependent, seriously ill, or frail family members depending on their family structure, resources, and life challenges?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	address root causes of financial insecurity such as high child support debt, low literacy, low wages, and unemployment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	affect the ability of families to balance time commitments to work, family, and community?

Principle 2. Family stability. Whenever possible, policies and programs should encourage and reinforce couple, marital, parental, and family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved. Intervention in family membership and living arrangements is usually justified only to protect family members from serious harm or at the request of the family itself.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

<u>Strong</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Limited</u>	<u>N/A</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	strengthen commitment to couple, marital, parental, and family obligations, and allocate resources to help keep the marriage or family together when this is the appropriate goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families avoid problems before they become serious crises or chronic situations that erode family structure and function?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	balance the safety and well-being of individuals with the rights and responsibilities of other family members and the integrity of the family as a whole?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide clear and reasonable guidelines for when nonfamily members are permitted to intervene and make decisions on behalf of the family (e.g., removal of a child or adult from the family)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	help families maintain regular routines when undergoing stressful conditions or at times of transition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize that major changes in family relationships such as aging, divorce, or adoption are processes that extend over time and require continuing support and attention?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide support to all types of families involved in the issue (e.g., for adoption, consider adoptive, birth, and foster parents; for remarried families, consider birth parents, stepparents, residential and nonresidential parents, etc.)?

Principle 3. Family relationships. Policies and programs must recognize the strength and persistence of family ties, whether positive or negative, and seek to create and sustain strong couple, marital, and parental relationships.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

<u>Strong</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Limited</u>	<u>N/A</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize that individuals' development and well-being are profoundly affected by the quality of their relationships with close family members and family members' relationships with each other?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	involve couples, immediate family members, and extended family when appropriate in working to resolve problems, with a focus on improving family relationships?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	assess and balance the competing needs, rights, and interests of various family members?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	take steps to prevent family abuse, violence, or neglect?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge how interventions and life events can affect family dynamics and, when appropriate, support the need for balancing change and stability in family roles, rules, and leadership depending upon individual expectations, cultural norms, family stress, and stage of family life?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide the knowledge, communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and problem-solving abilities needed for healthy couple, marital, parental, and family relationships or link families to information and education sources?

Principle 4. Family diversity. Policies and programs can have varied effects on different types of families. Policies and programs must acknowledge and respect the diversity of family life and not discriminate against or penalize families solely based on their cultural, racial, or ethnic background; economic situation; family structure; geographic locale; presence of special needs; religious affiliation; or stage of life.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

<u>Strong</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Limited</u>	<u>N/A</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	identify and respect the different attitudes, behaviors, and values of families from various stages of life; family structures; and cultural, economic, geographic, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	respect cultural and religious routines and rituals observed by families within the confines of the law?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	recognize the complexity and responsibilities involved in caring for and coordinating services for family members with special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, physical)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ensure the accessibility and quality of programs and services for culturally, economically, geographically, racially/ethnically, and religiously diverse families?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	work to ensure that operational philosophies and procedures are culturally responsive and that program staff are culturally competent?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge and try to address root causes rather than symptoms of the issue or problem (e.g., economic, institutional, political, social/psychological causes)?

Principle 5. Family engagement. Policies and programs must encourage partnerships between professionals and families. Organizational culture, policy, and practice should include relational and participatory practices that preserve family dignity and respect family autonomy.

How well does the policy, program, or practice:

Strong	Adequate	Limited	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	provide full information and a range of choices to families, recognizing that the length and intensity of services may vary according to family needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	train and encourage professionals to work in collaboration with families, to allow families to make their own decisions (within the confines of the law), and to respect their choices?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	involve family members, particularly from marginalized families, in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	affirm and build upon the existing and potential strengths of families, even when families are challenged by adversity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	make flexible program options available and easily accessible through co-location, coordinated application and reimbursement procedures, and collaboration across agencies, institutions, and disciplines?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	establish a coordinated policy and service system that allows localities and service providers to combine resources from various, diverse funding streams?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	acknowledge that the engagement of families, especially those with limited resources, may require emotional, informational, and instrumental supports (e.g., child care, financial stipends, transportation)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	connect families to community resources and help them be responsible consumers, coordinators, and managers of these resources?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	build on social supports that are essential to families' lives (e.g., friends; family-to-family support; community, neighborhood, volunteer, and faith-based organizations)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	consider the whole family (even if it is outside the scope of services) and recognize how family decisions and participation may depend upon competing needs of different family members?

KEY TOOL #3

FAMILY FUNCTIONS AND ROLES



Policies affect many aspects of family functioning. Family impact assessments analyze the effects of public policies on family functioning because of the many contributions families make for the benefit of their members and the good of society. This tool helps answer: What are the primary functions of families? Why do families matter to society? The primary functions of families are grouped into five broad categories:

- ▶ **Family Formation and Membership:** Families bring new individuals into the world and provide individuals with their basic personal identity, helping define who they are and where they come from and assuring continuity across generations. Government regulates this function through policies affecting childbirth, marriage, divorce, adoption, foster care, inheritance, etc.
- ▶ **Partner Relationships:** Families are a fundamental influence on individuals' abilities to form and maintain committed, stable partner relationships. Families can serve to strengthen and nurture healthy communication, cooperation, intimacy, and conflict management skills in their members. Government can support these efforts through policies regarding marriage, relationship education, benefit eligibility, tax incentives, etc.
- ▶ **Economic Support:** Families provide economic support to meet their dependents' basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, and so forth. Government sometimes supplements this family function through income, food, housing, and related supplements; job training; and various subsidies in the tax code.
- ▶ **Childrearing:** Families raise and nurture the next generation to be productive members of society. Families are responsible for ensuring children's health, safety, education, and general well-being and for teaching them values and appropriate social behavior. Government shares these responsibilities with families, sets minimal standards for parental behavior, and intervenes when these standards are not met.
- ▶ **Caregiving:** Families provide protective family care across the life cycle. Although not required to do so by law, families still provide most of the care and concern for the elderly, frail, ill, and disabled. Government supplements or supplants families who need help or are unwilling or unable to provide this care.

In order to carry out these various responsibilities, parents and other family members coordinate and manage complex relations with a host of different service providers. The way policies and programs are structured can affect families' ability to access, coordinate, and mediate these relations.

KEY TOOL #4

FAMILY FUNCTIONS SHARED WITH SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS



Families provide many different kinds of functions for the benefit of their members and the good of society. For the most part, these functions are fulfilled by families in alliance with other institutions.

Below, we provide a list of the major functions families perform (left hand column) with the corresponding institutions, providers, services, and systems (right hand column) that share those functions to a greater or lesser degree.

The first six functions are those that have the most direct significance for federal and state governments. However, at the local level, and especially at the service delivery level, human service professionals and community leaders need to be aware of the significance and interrelationship of other functions fulfilled by families and other public and private providers such as affection, identity, culture, socialization, religion, and recreation.

FAMILY FUNCTIONS	INSTITUTIONS, PROVIDERS, SERVICES, AND SYSTEMS (Public and Private)
Family formation and membership: adoption, birth, death, divorce, and marriage	Formation and dissolution systems: adoption services, divorce lawyers, family courts, family planning and obstetric services, hospice, marriage and divorce counseling, marriage laws, pre-marital preparation, pre-natal care, teen pregnancy programs, mortuaries
Economic support: providing clothing, food, shelter, and other necessities, through income, employment, and other assets	Economic systems: banks, income maintenance and housing programs, insurance, pensions, social insurance, transportation, unions, the workplace
Education: teaching knowledge, competencies, socialization, and life skills	Educational systems: child care, elementary and secondary schools, higher education, job training programs, libraries, pre-school, vocational education
Health and mental health: promoting good physical and mental health, caring for the sick	Health care services and mental health systems: clinics, counseling, health care, professionals' services, hospitals, public and private services, therapy
Protection of vulnerable family members: providing for the emotional and physical well-being and safety of the sick, frail, and troubled family members of all ages	Health and social service systems: charitable organizations, elderly day care, home-based health and social services, mental health agencies, nursing homes, respite care, social service agencies
Social responsibility: setting, teaching, and enforcing appropriate behavior, norms, and rules	Legal system: courts, juvenile homes, laws, prisons, probation
Affection and caring: providing affection, affirmation, intimacy, and mutual care	Support systems: extended family, marriage and family life education, neighborhood and community organizations, peer support groups
Identity: fostering community, ethnic, family, and national identity	Mediating systems: ethnic, community, and religious groups and programs at the local, state, and national levels
Cultural socialization: transmitting social and religious values and traditions	Media, educational, peer, religious, and recreational systems: electronic media, libraries, organizations (e.g., community-based, faith-based, social), places of worship, radio, recreational clubs, schools, and television
Religion: fostering family spirituality and worship	Religious systems: faith-based groups and organizations, places of worship, religious media
Recreation: facilitating diversion, entertainment, leisure	Recreation systems: entertainment industry, libraries, organized sports, recreational facilities

KEY TOOL #5

FAMILY DIVERSITY AND CONTEXTS



Policies and programs affect different aspects of family functioning for different types of families in different ways. This tool helps answer the question: What do we mean by the diversity of families? The schematic below lists the variety of family types, family contexts, and stages of the family life cycle. The list is meant to stimulate thought about the diversity of family forms and functions, but is not intended to be exhaustive.

FAMILY TYPES	FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE*	FAMILY CONTEXTS
<p>Socioeconomic Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Education level ▶ Income level ▶ Occupation <p>Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Couple with and without dependent children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • married • cohabiting • first marriage • remarriage/reconstituted family • domestic partnership ▶ Single-parent household <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • never married • separated • divorced • widowed • single-by-choice ▶ Foster family ▶ Adoptive family ▶ “Estranged” family ▶ Nuclear/extended/multigenerational household ▶ None/one/two/multiple wage earners ▶ “Living apart together” families—couples who are in cohabitation or marriage-like relationships who define themselves as couples, but who live in separate households (Cherlin, 2010, p. 410) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dating ▶ Hooking up ▶ Cohabitation ▶ No children ▶ Early formation—infants and preschoolers ▶ With school-age children ▶ With children in transition to adulthood ▶ With no dependent children ▶ With elderly dependents ▶ Elderly with adult children/grandchildren ▶ “Sandwich” generation—midlife adults with both young and old dependents ▶ Families with a dependent with developmental disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ethnic/racial/cultural ▶ Religious ▶ Socioeconomic ▶ Geographic (rural/suburban/urban) ▶ Presence of special needs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, physical, etc.) ▶ Informal social networks (extended family, friends, neighbors, peers)

*Families can be at more than one stage at a time.

KEY TOOL #6

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



This tool details several sources of policy and dimensions of implementation. *Sources of Policy* identifies the levels at which policies originate and, therefore, the primary levels and points of intervention for change. *Implementation Dimensions* are the multiple program components that shape the ways that policies are implemented and, hence, the ways programs directly and indirectly affect families.

SOURCES OF POLICY (Levels and Points of Intervention)

Law	Federal, state, and local statutes and ordinances
Court Rulings	Interpretation and application of laws
Regulations	Requirements that are promulgated in the executive branch (at federal, state, and local levels) to implement laws
Budget	Allocations of money to different programs
Administrative and Professional Practices	Memoranda and decisions that have no statutory or regulatory base; professional and bureaucratic procedures and traditions

IMPLEMENTATION DIMENSIONS

Governance	Who makes the implementation decisions and how the decisions are made
Mission and Goals	Statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives
Financing	Nature and type of funding (e.g., open-ended entitlement, matching grants)
Administration	Contract, procurement, and personnel systems; accountability and supervisory structure
Staffing	Qualifications and training of staff; job descriptions; staff development plans
Service Models	Assumptions, targets, and models of service delivery
Data Collection	Planning, monitoring, and accountability; what data are collected, how they are used, and how they coordinate with other related data
Program Evaluation	What family members are included; what family benchmark and outcome measures are collected



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