

Assessing the Impact of Child Care Centers on Families

Family Impact Self Assessment: A Checklist for Child Care Center Directors

The purpose of the questions that follow is to identify areas where support for families is strong as well as areas where it could improve. Please rate each item based on your knowledge of the center.

Program Philosophy and Attitudes

The program philosophy—that is, its underlying assumptions about the role of families in child care—affects almost every area of the program's operations. This philosophy is usually a combination of the assumptions underlying the programs, the operating policies and procedures, and the beliefs of the program administrator and staff. These questions relate to the ways that program philosophy is expressed:

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A statement of program philosophy regarding the role of families exists
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The statement of program philosophy is regularly reviewed and updated
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program philosophy is explained to families at enrollment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program philosophy is explained to new employees
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program has policies regarding confidentiality of records
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program has policies regarding family access to records
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program regularly informs parents about their child's progress
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The program regularly plans and invites families to special activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies exist regarding how staff should respond to uninvolved parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When parents seem resistant or are otherwise unavailable, procedures are in place for involving other members of the family
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When parents seem to need support, policies are in place for connecting them to community resources

Enrollment Procedures and Processes

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about the family is asked for in the first contact
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about the family is requested on the enrollment form
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents are told about how the family will be involved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents are told what services and information they can expect
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All family members are invited to the first meeting with the child
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent parents are encouraged to be involved

(Continued on back)

Family Data

Please rate how well the following information is gathered at enrollment.

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The significant family members in the child's life—both immediate family and extended family
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The current physical health and emotional/social functioning of members of the family
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The role of the important family members in the child's life, identifying positive and negative influences
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The family's social network and degree of social support
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizations or individuals that are important to the family (including church)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family's relationship to the school or other relevant agencies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recent family events or crises
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family's relationship to the older generation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The extent of involvement of the older generation with the child
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sources of family stress (e.g., health, workplace, unemployment, and divorce)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sources of family strength
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family problems that need to be addressed or referred elsewhere
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other relatives who might be involved if parents are unavailable at any time

Administrative and Organizational Issues

Staffing

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional background or experience the program staff have in working directly with families
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The extent that the staff's racial/ethnic background mirrors that of the children
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acknowledgement of staff's efforts to connect with families
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The weight given to work with family members in staff performance evaluations

Staff Training and Consultation

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular training for the staff on working with families
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trainings on working with culturally and racially diverse families
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacts with other child care centers successful in involving families

Family-Friendly Facilities

Strong	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drop-off and pick-up area are convenient, friendly, and attractive for family members
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private places large enough to talk with several members of a family at one time

Please add comments or additional details to any answers which you would like to clarify. Give examples of how you think your center supports families and the challenges that you face.

(Continued on back)

Profile of Family Backgrounds

The place to begin a family impact analysis is to review what is known about the family characteristics, circumstances, and home life of the families currently served by your child care center. Center data may be available to answer some or all of these questions. If not, rely on knowledgeable guesstimates based on your experience.

What is the family structure breakdown of your current client population?

- _____ % of families married
- _____ % of families divorced
- _____ % of families separated
- _____ % of families remarried
- _____ % of families never married

What is the breakdown of living arrangements for children at the center?

- _____ % of children living with one or both parents
- _____ % of children living with other relatives
- _____ % of children living in foster care
- _____ % of children living in other nonfamilial care

What is the racial/ethnic composition of the children at the center?

- _____ % of children who are American Indian or Alaska Native
- _____ % of children who are Asian
- _____ % of children who are Black or African American
- _____ % of children who are Hispanic
- _____ % of children who are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- _____ % of children who are White (not Hispanic)
- _____ % of children who are of other racial/ethnic composition

For those racial/ethnic minority groups that you indicated above, what training has the staff received to help them learn more about these cultures?

What percentage of the children at the center receive W-2 assistance?

- _____ % of children who receive W-2 assistance

What percentage of the children at the center have special needs (e.g., dietary; medications; therapy; cognitive, physical, or emotional challenges)?

- _____ % of children with special needs

What stresses are families at the center likely to be dealing with?

- _____ % of families currently affected by unemployment
- _____ % of families who have experienced serious health problems in the last year
- _____ % of families who have adopted a child in the last year
- _____ % of families who have divorced within the last year
- _____ % of families who have moved to the community within the last year
- _____ % of families who have emigrated from another country
- _____ % of families who have a member incarcerated
- _____ % of families experiencing other changes or stresses (e.g., neighborhood crime and violence, rural isolation, etc.); please describe.

Are there any special characteristics of the families served by the center? (For example, high proportion of military families, highly mobile families, etc.)

Have there been any recent changes in the types of families that are served by the center? (Changes in number of immigrant families, unemployed or underemployed families, etc.)

Center Director Background

To better understand how child care centers support families, it will help us to know the background of the child care professionals who have participated in the study. Please provide the following information about yourself. Do not include your name on the sheet.

What is your gender? Female Male

How old are you? _____

To what racial or ethnic group do you belong?

- American Indian or Alaska Native Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 Asian White (not Hispanic)
 Black or African American Other Racial/Ethnic composition _____
 Hispanic

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.

- Completed less than 6 years of school Some college or technical school Other _____
 Completed 7th through 9th grade College graduate
 Completed 10th or 11th grade Some graduate study
 High school graduation Graduate degree

Please indicate the amount of education you have in the child care field.

- Some undergraduate coursework in child care field Some graduate coursework in child care field
 Bachelor's degree in child care field Graduate degree in child care field
 Other child care credentials/certifications _____

Please indicate your years of child care experiences as a professional at the center? _____

Please indicate your total years of child care experience as a professional including this center and other places of employment. _____

Currently, how many hours per week do you usually work at the center? _____

What best describes your primary role at the center?

- Teacher or aide for infants Teacher or aide for school age children
 Teacher or aide for toddlers (1-2 years) Administrator
 Teacher or aide for preschoolers (3-4 years) Multiple roles. Please explain _____
 Teacher or aide for 4K program

Do you have a child/children attending the center? Yes No

How many children? _____

Ages of children: _____

This checklist was developed by Karen Bogenschneider, Professor and UW-Extension Family Policy Specialist; Olivia Little, Project Assistant, UW-Madison; Kathy Hetzel, Dodge County UW-Extension Family Living Educator; and Patti Herman, Columbia County UW-Extension Family Living Educator.

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