



EVALUATION

Evaluation is a process of collecting information and making judgments about how the centre is currently operating and it is used to help guide decisions for future planning.

It is an integral part of planning and is the key to continuous improvement in outside school hours care services.

The process of evaluation will be enhanced if it involves contributions from all stakeholders (children, families, staff and management) and if staff can openly reflect on their practice, have a positive attitude to change and accept diverse points of view.

Evaluation not only allows for staff and committee members to measure their success, but it also helps in developing future evaluations. This process should not be something that is only done at the end of a term or when a problem arises, but as an ongoing process throughout the life of the centre.

EVALUATION – WHY?

The major goal of evaluation should be to influence decision-making or policy formulation through the provision of practical, realistic feedback.

EVALUATION:

- Helps you **see** where you are now, where you have been and how well you have met your goals and objectives
- Helps **eliminate repetition** in the centre's program
- Helps **build a resource file** for successful and popular crafts, games and activities
- Helps staff **improve or discard** crafts, games and activities that were not successful and why they failed
- Allows for **dissatisfactions** to be aired
- Lets **new and relief staff** know what has been done in the past programs
- Is a quick resource file for **ideas** when developing the program
- Gives a **written overview** of what has happened in the centre and where the centre is headed

EVALUATION SHOULD BE:

- *Motivated by a genuine desire to improve all aspects of the centre's operation*
- *Unbiased and independent - not carried out with the intention of proving a point or discrediting someone*
- *An ongoing process and part of the regular meetings and routines throughout the year*

WHAT TO EVALUATE:

Areas needing to be evaluated may be determined by the time of year, areas requiring immediate improvement, or specific issues needing to be addressed. Ideally everything will eventually be evaluated.

The following are some areas you may wish to evaluate:

- **Centre's policies, aims & objectives** – are they relevant? How do you know?
- **Roles & responsibilities** – management and staff
- **Program of activities** – what works, what doesn't? Do you know why?
- **Family information documents** – are they effective? Do they need updating?
- **Space** – is it adequate? Could it be used better? What are the restrictions?
- **Activities, games, craft used** – are they age, ability and gender appropriate?
- **Children's enthusiasm & level of participation** – how do they participate? Why don't they participate?
- **Materials and resources** – are they adequate? Are they in good repair?
- **Safety** – how and when is this monitored?
- **Staff team performance & professional development** – how and when is this reviewed?
- **Quality of care** – how is this determined?

HOW TO EVALUATE:

There are many different methods of gathering information for evaluation purposes. You may want to target one or more areas depending on what kind of information you want.

Some examples are:

- **Observing** what's happening in your centre
- **Discussions with staff** and asking what they like or dislike at the centre and in the program
- **Discussions with children** and asking them individually what they like at the centre/ program
- **Survey for families and children** to complete and return to the centre
- **Discussion with the management committee members.**
- **To gather information effectively you need to ask the right questions.** Questions that are open-ended are the best because they give the person responding the opportunity to say why/how, etc. rather than merely answering "yes" or "no".

For example, you could ask the children "*What is your favourite thing to do while you are at OOSH and explain why is it your favourite thing*" - rather than - "*Do you like the activities at OOSH?*".

FINALISING THE EVALUATION:

Once you have gathered the information, you will need to decide what to do with the information.

The usual procedure is to consider all of the responses, either written or verbal and then:

- **List** what is working well and things that need changing
- **Discuss and agree** on the changes/ improvements to be made
- **Decide on strategies** to make the changes/ improvements
- **Develop a method for implementation** for the strategies
- Agree on **who will be responsible** for the implementation
- **Decide on a timeline** for when the changes/ improvements will be made
- **Follow through** to ensure that the changes/ improvements are being implemented
- **Monitor** to see if the changes/improvements are working

And of course... start all over again!

OTHER RELEVANT NETWORK FACTSHEETS:

Program Planning

A Guide to Family Involvement

