

NUTS AND BOLTS OF WRITING AN EVALUATION PLAN

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About Our Presenter

Pam Kelley, Ph.D. is President of Kelley Analytics, LLC, located in Princeton, New Jersey. She has over fifteen years' experience as a program evaluator, researcher, and data analyst, specializing in assessing interventions designed to improve social services and systems integration for underserved and special needs populations.



Prior to founding Kelley Analytics, Dr. Kelley worked as a research associate with the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, where she investigated economic cost and quality relationships in early education programs. Dr. Kelley also served as the Director of Evaluation for the Central New Jersey Maternal and Child Health Consortium, where she designed and implemented evaluations of state-funded programs designed to promote healthy outcomes across the life course.

Some of her recent work includes an evaluation of a statewide special education volunteer advocate program, evaluation of a national program to promote developmental screening in pediatric primary care practices, and an evaluation of statewide community partnerships in improving the integration of education, health, and social service systems.

Prior to earning her Ph.D. in Social Work with a Policy concentration from Columbia University, Pam worked as a counselor for runaway and homeless youth and their families. The understanding and insights she gained as a youth and family counselor continue to inform her work today as a researcher, data analyst, and evaluator.



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WEBINAR OUTLINE

- Overview of Evaluation and Evaluation Plans
- Basic Outline of an Evaluation Plan
- Putting It All Together
 - Overview and Purpose
 - Program Description
 - Evaluation Questions
 - Methods
 - Reporting
- Tips and Tricks
- Q & A

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WHAT IS EVALUATION?

The systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of an initiative, used to make judgments about the initiative, improve its effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future development (Patton, 1997).

The examination of the worth, merit, or significance of an initiative (Scriven, 1998).

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BASIC EVALUATION PLAN OUTLINE

- I. Overview and Purpose**
 - A. Background information
 - B. Brief overview of general approach/type of evaluation
 - C. Purpose of the evaluation
- II. Program Description**
 - A. Logic Model
- III. Evaluation Questions**
- IV. Methods**
 - A. Methods/techniques used to answer evaluation questions
 - B. Measures/indicators
 - C. Data sources
 - D. Data collection procedures, timeline, and persons responsible
 - E. Data analysis plan (a summary of how data will be analyzed)
- V. Reporting**
 - A. Plan for reporting evaluation findings and sharing lessons learned

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I. Overview and Purpose

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EVALUATION OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

A short, concise, overview of the evaluation that includes the following:

- Type of evaluation
- Timeframe of the evaluation
- Key person/s responsible for conducting the evaluation
- Purpose of the evaluation and what the results will be used for.

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Common Evaluation Types

PROCESS/IMPLEMENTATION (FORMATIVE)

Answers the question: How does this program work?

Focuses on: Descriptions and details of operations, implementation, and services.

Examples:

- Intensity (how much of) and quality of the services provided
- Context and community in which a program is delivered
- Demographic characteristics of participants
- Collaborative partnerships
- Staffing and training

OUTCOMES (SUMMATIVE)

Answers the question: Does this program work?

Focuses on: Effects of the activities/services on the participants.

Examples:

- Increased knowledge
- Improved skills
- Increased confidence
- Changed behaviors
- Improved quality of life

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(Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestid/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf>)

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Common Evaluation Types (cont'd)

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Answers the question: How are we doing?
Focuses on: Regular, ongoing tracking or “monitoring” of service characteristics such as quantity, quality, reach of target population, etc. May or may not be compared to a target benchmarks or performance measures.

Examples:

- Quantity (how much of) of services provided
- Quality of services provided
- Demographic characteristics of participants
- Recruitment of participants

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Answers the question: What are the characteristics and needs of our target population/community?
Focuses on: Identifying the specific needs, strengths, and issues of the community or population being served, for program planning purposes.

Examples:

- Demographic characteristics of target population/community
- Gaps in available services
- Resiliency factors



Depending on the purpose of the evaluation, more than one type may be involved. A comprehensive evaluation includes both formative and summative components and often includes performance monitoring.

(Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf>)

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EVALUATION PURPOSES

- **Accountability:** to assess whether the program resulted in desired changes, achievement of goals/objectives, or whether progress has been made toward achieving goals/objectives.
- **Decision-making:** to inform program planning and prioritization of program activities and goals/objectives.
- **Improvement:** to identify aspects of program in need of improvement to better serve the target population and achieve goals/objectives.
- **Monitoring:** to provide regular, ongoing, feedback on the extent to which the program is on track to meeting its goals/objectives.

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II. Program Description

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A narrative description of the program that includes the logic model (table or figure) with a narrative description of the logic model elements and the relationships between them.

- A logic model is a visual representation of the relationships between a program's planned work and its intended results.
- Logic models identify a program's available resources (inputs), what the program does or the services it provides (activities), the program's reach and direct products of its activities (outputs) and what the program expects to achieve (outcomes).
 - Provides stakeholders with a shared frame of reference about how the program is expected to work
 - Helps to guide the development of evaluation questions
 - Helps to guide decisions about what will be measured.

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Logic Model Template with Examples

PROCESS/IMPLEMENTATION

OUTCOMES

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
<i>In order to accomplish our planned activities we will need the following resources:</i>	<i>In order to achieve our goals, we will accomplish the following activities:</i>	<i>We expect that accomplishing these activities will produce the following tangible evidence, or service delivery:</i>	<i>We expect that accomplishing these activities will lead to the following results: [within approx. 1 year]</i>	<i>We expect that accomplishing these activities will lead to the following results: [in approx. 1-3 yrs.]</i>	<i>We expect that accomplishing these activities will lead to the following result: [in approx. 3-5 yrs.]</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Families Staff Partners Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide online and in-person training for parents Provide individual TA to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of resources distributed Number of online and in-person training sessions Number of parents participating in trainings and individual TA 	Increased parental knowledge of the following: (a) The nature of their child's disabilities, (b) Their rights under IDEA, and (c) Special education systems.	Increased parental ability to do the following: (a) Help their child succeed, (b) navigate special education systems, and (c) Use effective modes of collaboration with educators	Parents and educators collaborate to provide improved services to children with disabilities

Adapted from Gillis, M. Shaver, D., Lammert, J. (2019).

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III. Evaluation Questions

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Evaluation Questions

- Use the logic model as a guide to develop a set of evaluation questions for the evaluation to answer. These questions will help to focus your evaluation on what is most important for you/your stakeholders to know.
- It may help to think: *“What is it we really want to know about what we do?”* or *“What would be most useful for us to know about what we do?”*
- If necessary, revise the logic model and/or questions to keep them aligned with each other.

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PROCESS/IMPLEMENTATION (FORMATIVE)				OUTCOMES (SUMMATIVE)		
	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Logic Model Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families • Funding • PTI staff • Technical assistance (TA) providers • State and local educational staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide online and in-person training for parents • Provide individual TA to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of online and in-person training sessions • Number of parents participating in training and individual TA 	Increased parental knowledge of the following: (a) The nature of their child's disabilities, (b) Their rights under IDEA, and (c) Special education systems.	Increased parental ability to do the following: (a) Help their child succeed, (b) navigate special education systems, and (c) use effective modes of collaboration with educators	Parents and educators collaborate to provide improved services to children with disabilities
Example Evaluation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the total monetary investment in the project? • What is the total staff full-time equivalent (FTE) applied to the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What TA activities have been implemented, changed, and/or added? • What successes and challenges have been experienced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many online and in-person training sessions have been held? • How many parents participated in online and in-person training sessions and individual TA? 	What percentage of participating parents have increased knowledge of the nature of their children's disabilities, their rights under IDEA, and special education systems?	What percentage of participating parents are better able to help their children succeed, navigate special education systems, and use effective modes of collaboration with educators?	What percentage of participating parents collaborate with teachers to provide improved services to children with disabilities?

From Gillis, M. Shaver, D., Lammert, J. (2019).

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From Gillis, M. Shaver, D., Lammert, J. (2019).

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Evaluation Questions Example

This evaluation is designed to answer the following questions:

- What TA activities have been implemented, changed, and/or added?
- What successes and challenges have been experienced?
- How many online and in-person training sessions have been held?
- How many parents participated in online and in-person training sessions and individual TA?
- What percentage of participating parents have increased knowledge in the following key content areas:
 - The nature of their children's disabilities,
 - Their rights under IDEA, and
 - Special education systems?
- In what ways can TA be improved to better meet the needs of parents?

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IV. Methods

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METHODS

Methods refer to the techniques (e.g. surveys, focus groups, pre-posttests, use of program records; interviews; etc.) that you will use to collect the data needed to answer your evaluation questions.

The **methods section** of your evaluation plan provides a clear description of how the evaluation will be implemented and should identify the measures, methods, data sources, as well as roles and responsibilities.



Ideally, the evaluation questions inform the methods – aim to select appropriate methods that fit the evaluation questions you want to answer.

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COMMON DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS METHODS

- Common Data Sources
 - Training attendance sign-in lists
 - Tracking logs for resource distribution
 - Surveys
 - Pre-posttests
 - Focus group transcripts
- Common Methods for Data Analysis
 - Frequency Counts (Quantitative)
 - Percentages (Quantitative)
 - Summary of common themes from open-ended survey questions (Qualitative)
 - Summary of common themes from focus group transcripts (Qualitative)



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METHODS GRID

Evaluation Question	Measures/ Indicators	Method	Data Source	Data Collection Frequency/Roles
How many online and in-person training sessions are held?	Total number of online and in-person sessions held	Program record review	Center records	Weekly; Training Coordinator will submit weekly training logs to Manager
How many individuals accessed web resources?	Total number of downloads Number of downloads by type of resource	Review of website analytics	Google Analytics	Annually. IT Director will submit Google Analytics to Manager
How many parents participated in TA?	Total number of parents who received TA	Program record review	Center records (attendance sign-in lists); spreadsheet with totals entered	Ongoing; training facilitator will collect sign-ins at each event and enter the totals in a spreadsheet. Training facilitator will submit spreadsheet to Manager quarterly.
How satisfied were parents with TA?	Percentage of parents who reported "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on a TA satisfaction survey question that asks "Overall, how satisfied were you with the TA you received?"	Survey	Completed TA satisfaction surveys (Survey Monkey data file)	Ongoing; after each event, training facilitator will send survey link to all participants. Manager will access to Survey Monkey account for percentages.
	Summary of reflections expressed by parents	Focus group	Focus group transcripts (MS Word documents)	Focus Group consultant will conduct 2 focus groups per year, prepare and analyze transcripts, and send a summary report to Manager at the end of the year.
What percentage of parents have increased knowledge?	The percentage of parents with a higher total score on the <i>Parent Knowledge Questionnaire (PKQ)</i> following the training compared to	Pre-Posttest	Completed <i>Parent Knowledge Questionnaire</i> tools and Excel data file.	Ongoing; training facilitator will administer pre-post at each event and will enter data into Excel spreadsheet. Facilitator will submit spreadsheet to Manager quarterly.

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Making Target-Setting More Palatable



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SETTING TARGETS: TRY THE SMART APPROACH

Attributes of SMART objectives:

- **Specific:** includes the “who”, “what”, and “where”. Use only one action verb to avoid issues with measuring success.
- **Measurable:** focuses on “how much” change is expected, *based on your best estimate*.
- **Achievable:** realistic given program resources and planned implementation.
- **Relevant:** relates directly to program and/or activity goals.
- **Time-bound:** focuses on “when” the objective will be achieved.

Examples:

- By December 31, 2020, 95% of parents who request in-person TA will receive it within 2 weeks.
- By June 30, 2021, 90% of parents will report the TA was either “useful” or “very useful.”
- By June 30, 2023, the percentage of parents with higher knowledge scores pertaining to their rights under IDEA will increase from 20% before training to 85% after training.
- By June 30, 2020, a range of between 80% and 95% of parents will report increased ability to help their child succeed as a result of participating in our center’s training.

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007).

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SETTING TARGETS: POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES

- Funder’s stated expectations, recommended guidance, RFPs
- Relevant stakeholders’ expectations
- Literature review of similar programs
- Your own center’s data from the past
- Existing state or local data from related initiatives
- Search for “grey literature” such as conference abstracts, presentations, working papers, fact sheets, newsletters, and other resources that describe the accomplishments of similar programs
- Research organization websites and clearinghouses, such as the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) and the [National Center for Special Education Research](#).

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V. Reporting

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REPORTING

- Includes a brief description of how you will share your evaluation results, with whom, and when.
- Developing an intentional plan for communicating/disseminating your evaluation results supports their use for improvement and decision-making.
- Tailor the formatting and language of each report for its target audience
- Examples include the following:
 - End-of-project or end-of-year final evaluation report, targeted to funder
 - Executive summary or results brief targeted to Board of Directors
 - Quarterly progress/performance reports targeted to relevant staff
 - One-page fact sheets or results briefs targeted to parents or partnering organizations

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TIPS AND TRICKS

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TIPS AND TRICKS

- Before you begin, assemble any relevant documents, such as RFPs; funder guidance; written goals and objectives; logic models; etc.
- Know your audience
- Consider including input from other stakeholders
- Try to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data
- Use consistent language in the logic model and in your evaluation plan narrative. The elements in the logic model should map or align directly to the evaluation plan
- Note any challenges you may face and (briefly) describe how you may overcome these
- Keep it simple
- You can do it!

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EVALUATION STANDARDS

- **Utility:** Serve information needs of intended users.
- **Feasibility:** Be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.
- **Propriety:** Behave legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and those affected.
- **Accuracy:** Evaluation is comprehensive and grounded in the data.
- **Accountability:** Document the evaluation purpose, implemented designs, procedures, data, and outcomes.

(The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011)

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Questions?

Ask the evaluator

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Thank you!

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