

Formative Evaluation Toolkit

Why You Need This

The Formative Evaluation Toolkit, developed for the Children’s Bureau at the Administration for Children and Families, provides steps and resources to conduct a formative evaluation of program implementation and early outcomes. A formative evaluation is used to determine whether an intervention or program is being implemented as intended (i.e., adhering to the model) and producing the expected outputs and short-term outcomes. As an analytic tool, it helps program managers know whether a program is on the right track and yields timely feedback to improve the implementation process.

What You’ll Find

This Toolkit provides:

- Introduction to formative evaluation, addressing why it is needed, and how it is grounded in an implementation science approach.
- Guidelines and tools for getting started with a formative evaluation, including a timeline, theory of change, a logic model, program supports, data systems, and usability testing.
- Guidance on conducting a formative evaluation, such as how to identify evaluation questions and indicators of program functioning, ensuring readiness, choosing methods, collecting data, analyzing, and reporting data, and deciding on next steps.
- Case study (of a fictional county) to guide you through each component of planning and conducting a formative evaluation.

How to Use

Use this toolkit to learn how to conduct a formative evaluation to build evidence about an intervention or program. It includes multiple planning tools, references, and a glossary to guide each step.