

When planning for an evaluation, it is important to consider the purpose of the evaluation. Why have you decided to conduct an evaluation, and what do you expect to learn from the evaluation process? The table below presents the difference between a process and outcome evaluation. Understanding the goals of your evaluation will help you determine which type of evaluation will best fit your needs and guide your evaluation plan with your evaluation team.

Program Evaluation		
Type	Process Evaluation or Implementation Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation
Goal	To identify whether the program/curriculum is being implemented as intended and determine if the people implementing and receiving the program are satisfied with the program/curriculum	To identify whether the program/curriculum is having the intended impact (e.g., did participation in the program improve literacy skills?)
Primary Question	How does the program work?	Does the program work?
Example Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the program/curriculum delivered for the recommended amount of time (e.g., four 15-minute blocks per day)? 2. Are the curriculum activities being implemented as designed (i.e., fidelity)? 3. Are the staff and participants satisfied with the curriculum? 4. Do teachers or staff think that the activities will have the intended impact (e.g., school readiness)? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does participation in the program produce changes in participants' skills, knowledge, behaviors, or attitudes (e.g., increased social-emotional skills, language and literacy development, improved cognitive development)? 2. Have the overall goals and objectives of the program been achieved?
Optimal Timing	Throughout the delivery of a program/curriculum and directly after the program/curriculum is completed.	Any time after program/curriculum completion. However, it is recommended that outcomes be assessed at follow-up time periods to assess sustainment of outcomes, such as at 3-, 6- and 12-month time periods.
Domains to be Measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dose- how long the intervention is delivered over time, how often and in what amount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over time to conditions with conditions increasing, improving, or becoming greater or conditions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidelity- the degree to which a program is implemented as it is recommended by the developer or experts in the field • Satisfaction- how the participants feel about the program based on their experiences and expectations • Sustainability- how well the program can be expected to be delivered over time with continued positive outcomes • Appropriateness- the degree to which the program fits the context in which it is delivered • Feasibility- the likelihood a program can be implemented considering factors, such as budget or resources 	<p>decreasing and becoming fewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term results, intermediate results, and long-term results <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased occurrence of child maltreatment cases • Reduction in positive drug testing • Improved school performance • Fewer school behavioral referrals
Comparison Groups	None Necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental Group (Individuals who participated in the curriculum or program being evaluated) • Control Group (similar individuals who did not participate in the curriculum or program being evaluated)
Consequences of Conducting an Evaluation too Soon	None. An evaluation can be conducted at any point in the implementation of a curriculum/program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding that the program does not accomplish what is intended, not because it does not work, but because sites are still working to implement the program as intended. • Finding positive effects when the program is not being implemented as intended so we do not know what exactly produced those effects (e.g., only 6 of the 8 recommended sessions were delivered).



Benefits to Conducting an Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides insight to any barriers that may arise when implementing the program • Allows those delivering the program to monitor how well the program’s activities and curriculum are working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows those implementing the program to know whether they are being effective in meeting the program goals and objectives
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Once you have determined that the program you are delivering or intend to deliver is ready to be evaluated, the next step is to start the planning process for conducting an evaluation. The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State has developed an Evaluation Planning Worksheet and other tools to assist professionals in planning for an evaluation and generating dialogue among members of an evaluation team. You may access these tools at <https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/resources/program-implementation-toolkit/>

The Clearinghouse has Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists who are available to help by offering support and guidance through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation processes. These TA Specialists are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT Monday through Friday. Use the information below to contact the Clearinghouse!

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