

FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL

EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN FIRST PROGRAMS

All programs must include outcomes evaluation. This means:

- Clear outcomes targets must be stated before the administration of any program. Program applications should state all outcome targets and explain how they contribute to FCFC priorities.
- An outcome is a change in a client's behavior, attitudes or knowledge.
Descriptions or counts of services are important, but they are not outcomes.
- An outcomes target must state the projected number of clients who will achieve an outcome, out of the projected total clients served. For instance: Out of 25 students participating in the group activity, 18 will show improved attendance by the end of the school year.
- Outcomes targets should be challenging to achieve, but doable. Targets should not be set so low that success is guaranteed.
- Outcomes must be measurable.
- Outcomes measurements must be formal, consistent and systematic. It is not sufficient to say "School staff reported improvement in the student's behavior." If staff observations are used as data, then a behavior ratings scale should be used to collect the data or least a formal survey.
- Examples of data sources for measurement include (but aren't limited to) school records, ratings scales administered by school or program staff, and pretest/posttest results.
- Success must be clearly defined. For instance, if improved attendance is the target, then the program application must define what counts as improved attendance. Statistical testing should be used whenever appropriate to determine success.
- The evaluation report must make clear how many students were served *and* how many achieved the desired outcome. It should be clear whether the program met its original outcomes targets.
- From year to year, outcomes targets should be adjusted based on previous year's experience. The ultimate goal is to raise the bar as high as realistically possible.