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Table of Contents

Table of Evaluations

Table of CD Contents

Life Skills, Safety, and Social Skills in Transition Planning (pre/posttest)

Folder: Interagency Collaboration

Arkansas Transition Summit 2008 Team Planning Tool

Sample Transition Services Database

Folder: Family Involvement

Oklahoma Transition Institute 2008 Team Planning Tool

Parent Questionnaire and Focus Group Script

New Mexico Informal Family Forum

Transition Family Night Evaluation

Folder: Program Structures

New Mexico Summer Transition Institute 2004 Team Planning Tool

Transition-Related Legislation Quiz

Self-Assessment: Ability to Implement Professional Development

Self-Assessment: Knowledge of Transition Related Services

SPP Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14: Understanding National, State, and Local Needs-Evaluation

Arkansas Transition Unit Strategic Planning Evaluation

Oklahoma Transition Institute: Facilitator Preparation Evaluation

Third Annual Oklahoma Transition Institute Evaluation

Secondary Transition State Planning Institute: Building for the Future Facilitator Preparation Evaluation

Folder: Strategies for Reporting Results

Checklist for Identifying and Evaluating Program Goals, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes

Taxonomy for Transition Programming: Examples for Planning and Evaluating Goals, Activities, and Outcomes

Implementing Transition-Focused Education: Reporting Program Outcomes–Planning Form

Reporting Transition Practices Achievement

Transition Activities–Report of Program Outcomes

Implementing Transition-Focused Education: Evaluation Report Template

Overview of NSTTAC's Evaluation Toolkit

Welcome to the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center's (NSTTAC) *Evaluation Toolkit*. At NSTTAC, we are committed to data-based decision making and we view evaluation as a tool for improving our work. For some, the idea of evaluation and data analysis can be an overwhelming task—we created the NSTTAC *Evaluation Toolkit* with that in mind! We want to assist transition educators and service providers to improve their programs and services by determining what is working, what is not working, and what needs changing or replicating.

This toolkit will show you how. It provides specific examples for state and local teams who are developing goals and activities for providing effective transition education and services for students with disabilities. It is designed to help you determine what is important to your stakeholders, what needs to be measured to satisfy stakeholders, what is feasible to measure, how to measure these items, and how to report your findings.

The toolkit is a work in progress developed by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC). In this first section, we provide general information about evaluation; information regarding the SPP/APR transition indicators, evidence-based transition practices, and NSTTAC's program improvement process; and specific strategies for planning and developing your evaluations. In subsequent sections, we provide details of the NSTTAC capacity building model and associated tools for implementation, the Taxonomy for Transition Programming tool used to guide local team planning, "real-life" examples of evaluation tools in each Taxonomy area, and strategies and templates on how to report your results. The accompanying CD includes electronic copies of the evaluation instruments; electronic files are also available at our website: **www.nsttac.org**. As we identify or develop them, we will add additional evaluation instruments and templates for your use.

Why Evaluation is So Important

You may be asking: "Why evaluate?" or "Why is evaluation so important?" The rationale to evaluate our impact comes from sources internal and external to our field of transition and special education. With the passage of several important legislative acts, the field of special education has been assigned with the tasks of evaluating both the in-school and post-school outcomes of students with disabilities, as well as the special education programs that serve them. Years ago, evaluation of educational programs took a back seat to hands-on daily work with students. Frequently, evaluations of students' programs were not performed at all, with a resulting loss of valuable information useful for improving instruction and services. Today, our field recognizes that for students to achieve their optimal capabilities and reach their goals, we must capitalize on every moment of opportunity and provide instruction and services supported by evidence of effectiveness. We've moved away from talking about the theoretical value of special education, to a context where we must account for results. This context requires that we determine the strategies we are using produce the intended effects.

Further, our local, state, and federal governments invest significant resources into the education of our children, and stakeholders are demanding accountability at an ever-increasing rate. They want to know both the actual and future impact of our educational programs. We recognize that isolated case studies and anecdotal evidence do not provide the information we need to improve what we do. For this reason, evaluations must be viewed as an integral piece of every program, not as an add-in or afterthought. Without an evaluation plan, program impact is difficult to predict or to determine. Evaluations allow us to analyze our predictions about our programs and to understand what has worked and what has not. Lessons learned from evaluations help everyone involved improve results. In addition, evaluations help justify investment in educational programs by demonstrating program impacts.

The challenges that confront us in the field of transition are multidimensional and complex. There is no one size-fits-all model that may be applied to our transition education and services that will fit all students in all situations. Therefore, we combine what we know about evidence-based practices with performance data to create goals and improve services within our local contexts. Ultimately, however, there comes a point when we must measure "what works, what doesn't work, and why" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 1). Osborne and Gaebler (1992) caution us:

- What gets measured gets done.
- If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.
- If you can't see success you can't reward it.
- If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure .....
- If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.
- If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can will public support.

Without effective evaluations of our programs, we will never know if they are successful or make any difference to the students and families with whom we work. Accordingly, the question is no longer "Why do we do evaluations?" but "How do we do them?"

Improving Results: The SPP/APR Transition Indicators

In addition to increasing knowledge about program evaluation, this Evaluation Toolkit is designed to assist state, district, and local teams develop evaluation plans and evidence to improve their performance on the Special Education State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14. When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in December 2004, and became effective in July 2005, the U. S. Department of Education, through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), required states to develop six-year State Performance Plans around 20 Part B indicators, on which data are submitted annually in an Annual Performance Report (APR). Indicator 13 relates to content in a student's individual education program (IEP) regarding education and transition services. Effective with the 2010 data collection for the 2011 APR, Indicator 13 is as follows:

> **Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes appropriate measureable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based on age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student**

to meet those post secondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition service needs. There must also be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority [20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)].

Data for the APR are provided from a state monitoring or state data system. When calculating their performance on Indicator 13, state agencies use the following formula: the number of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measureable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including cases of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals and the annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs, with evidence that the student was invited to the IEP team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority, divided by the number of you with an IEP age of 16 and above, multiplied by100. In their State Performance Plans, states must set their Indicator 13 target at 100 percent.

Three other SPP/APR indicators—Indicators 1, 2, and 14—serve to illustrate the effectiveness of special education; these indicators are considered performance indicators. Respectively, their focus includes graduation rates, dropout rates, and students' post-school outcomes in terms of employment and attending post-secondary education. Information about these indicators can be especially useful for identifying what is working and what is not. The IEP content represented in Indicator 13 reflects practices associated with improving post-school outcomes of students with disabilities, such as setting post-school goals based on transition-related assessments; aligning annual goals, instruction, and services with post-school goals; and collaborative planning and implementation among students, families, educators, and service providers (Kohler and Field, 2002). Improving transition education and services can improve students' post-school outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 1, asking specific questions about your state and local performance on the four "transition" indicators can guide you toward improvement. NSTTAC's mission is to assist state agencies to build capacity for program improvement at the local level and one aspect of this mission is to improve performance on the SPP/APR Indicator 13.

Effective Transition Practices

Over the past decade, transition practices research has illustrated that post-school outcomes of students with disabilities improve when educators, families, students, and community members and organizations work together to implement a broad perspective of transition planning, more appropriately referred to as transition-focused education (Kohler and Field, 2002). In general, this concept of transition-focused education represents the perspective that "transition planning" is the fundamental basis of education that guides development of students' educational programs, rather than an "add-on" activity for students with disabilities when they turn age 14 or 16. The impact of transition-focused education is greatly enhanced when service systems and programs connect and support the implementation and application of such learning.

Kohler and her colleagues developed a *Taxonomy for Transition Programming*, which presents a comprehensive, conceptual organization of practices through which transition-focused education and services are developed and delivered. This taxonomy emerged from several investigations that reviewed research literature (Kohler, 1993), evaluation studies (Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, & McGinty, 1994), and model transition project outcomes (Rusch, Kohler, & Hughes, 1992). Through a three-phased research process, effective practices emerging from these studies were synthesized and organized into five categories: (a) student–focused planning, (b) student development, (c) interagency collaboration, (d) family involvement, and (e) program structure and attributes (Kohler, 1996). The practices included in the model were evaluated using criteria proposed by Peters and Heron (1993) to determine "best practices". They are associated with positive student outcomes, have a sound basis in theory, are supported in the literature, and were socially validated by a national group of transition

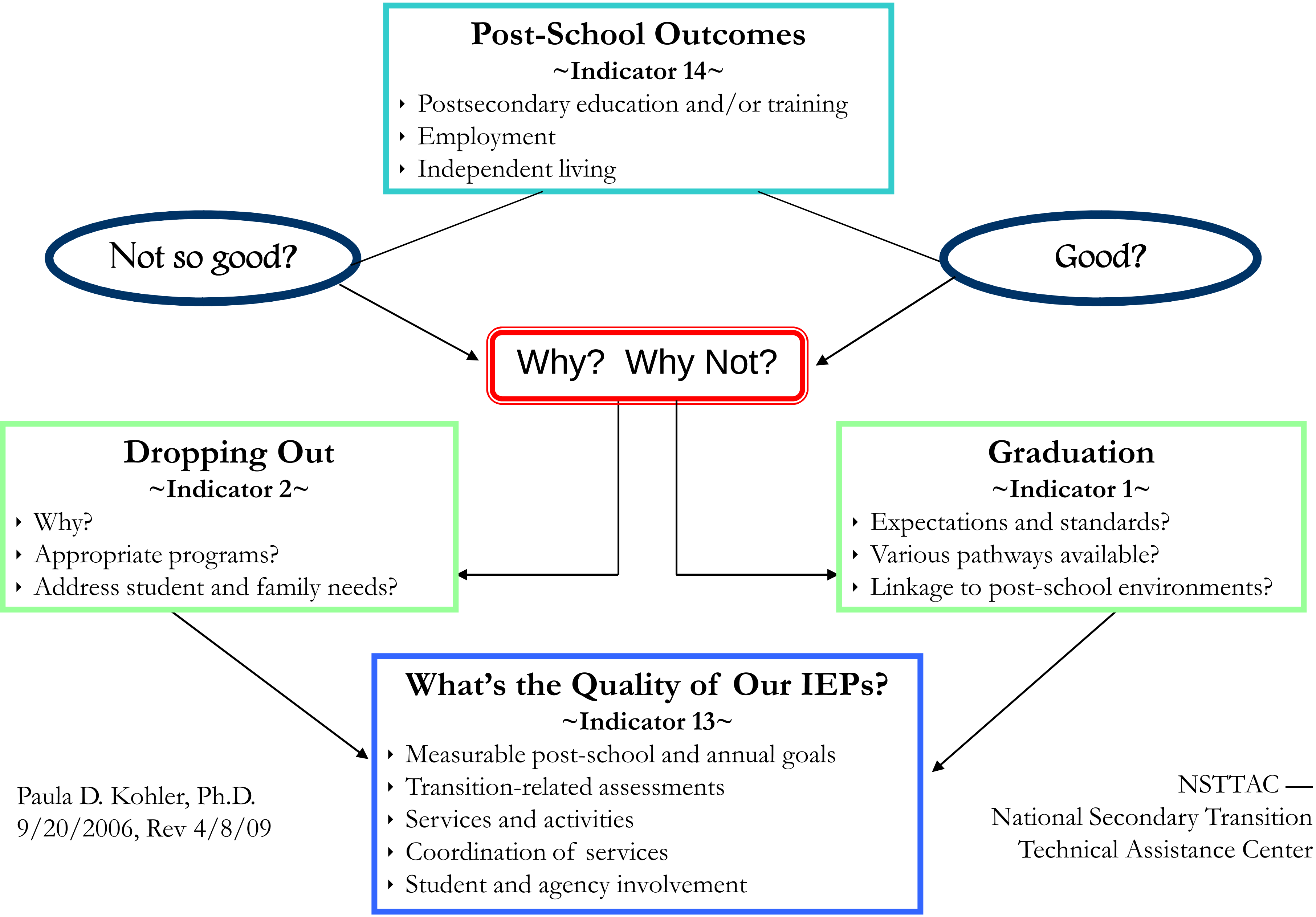

Figure 1. Using transition indicators to improve what we do.

experts. Empirical support exists for specific strategies for implementing many of the practices (see www.nsttac.org).

NSTTAC is using the Taxonomy to organize our work to further identify evidence-based practices and as a foundation for building state capacity. This *Toolkit* is organized to provide you evaluation examples in each of the five taxonomy areas. A graphic of the Taxonomy for Transition Planning is presented in Section 3 in the Team Planning Tool for Improving Transition Education and Services.

The NSTTAC Program Improvement Process

At NSTTAC, we want to assist you in building capacity to support and improve transition education, services, and outcomes for youth with disabilities. The NSTTAC staff has spent several decades of research and field-testing to identify proven methods for building this capacity. What has resulted is a five-step planning process for implementing evidenced-based practice that utilizes the Taxonomy for Transition Programming.

Illustrated in Figure 2, the five-step process starts with building a committed team of key members who are passionate about program improvement. This team gathers to assess implementation levels and effectiveness of their taxonomy practices by reviewing their existing data. Next, the team creates a yearly plan of improvement and data collection based on the needs of their current program. The third step is to execute the annual plan and collect additional formative and summative information. Fourth, the team evaluates the outcomes based on what their data show. Finally, the team identifies what worked and celebrates the accomplishments; at the same time, they identify remaining needs and start the process again. In its simplest form, the process is to evaluate, plan, act, and evaluate in an ever-improving cycle.

Evaluation Strategies

In this section, we provide information and ideas for designing and developing your evaluations. As we illustrate, an evaluation can be broad and complex, or narrow and simple. The first things to consider are when to evaluate your program and what you want to learn. Then you can determine how to collect and analyze your data and report your findings.

When to Evaluate

Evaluation may occur at the end of a program or project; this is referred to as summative evaluation or the sum total of what you've accomplished when you reach your final goal. An evaluation focused on determining the extent to which students with disabilities go to work or attend post-secondary education within one year of school exit (SPP/APR Indicator 14) is an example of a summative evaluation. Summative evaluation is important, but the on-going assessment of your programs is also essential. This is known as formative evaluation or evaluation used to measure progress towards your goals in order to determine the next steps needed. Harvey (1998) notes that "When a cook tastes the soup, it is formative evaluation; when the dinner guest tastes the soup, it is summative evaluation" (p. 7).

"Effective evaluation is not an 'event' that occurs at the end of a project, but is an ongoing process which helps decision-makers better understand the project; how it is impacting participants, partner agencies, and the community; and how it is being influenced and/or impacted by both internal and external factors" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 3). Although NSTTAC assists states to focus on formative evaluation through our annual and mid-year institutes, on-going attention to formative evaluation in your

Figure 2. The NSTTAC program improvement process

local and state teams will increase the sustainability of effective practices and programs.

Planning for Evaluation

The most effective evaluations are created in the planning phase. Good planning will enable you to make the most of your resources, increase the quality of the data you produce, and ensure the results will be constructive. Evaluation planning has two questions:

- What are the desired outcomes of your program?
- How will you measure the outcomes?

Evaluations should match the scale of your work. For example, if you are trying to improve interagency collaboration, don't plan to measure this outcome by merely counting how many agencies attend the fall transition workshop. The evaluation will need to provide a variety of evidence that illustrates improved collaboration and its consequences. In contrast, if you are focusing on building student competence, be sure to focus on student skill level and/or achievement.

Creating a Logic Model

In the planning phase, we recommend that you draw a logic model for your project to help visualize how activities lead to outcomes. A logic model is a simple yet very powerful tool that helps clarify thinking, measure progress along the way, and communicate your objectives to others. A typical logic model has five parts which include resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact (see Figure 3). Once you draw out your logic model, it becomes easy to look at the logic of your project or program and determine its feasibility. You may want to ask yourselves some of the following questions:

- Are the activities you planned likely to lead to the outcomes you want?
- Are there any internal or external factors which may create barriers in your project?
- Do you have the necessary resources to complete your project?
- Are there other key stakeholders who need to be involved in this process?
- Are you trying to accomplish too little or too much in one year?

For further assistance in creating a logic model we highly recommend The W.K. Kellogg Foundation *Logic Model Development Guide* found at www.wkkf.org in the publications and resources section.

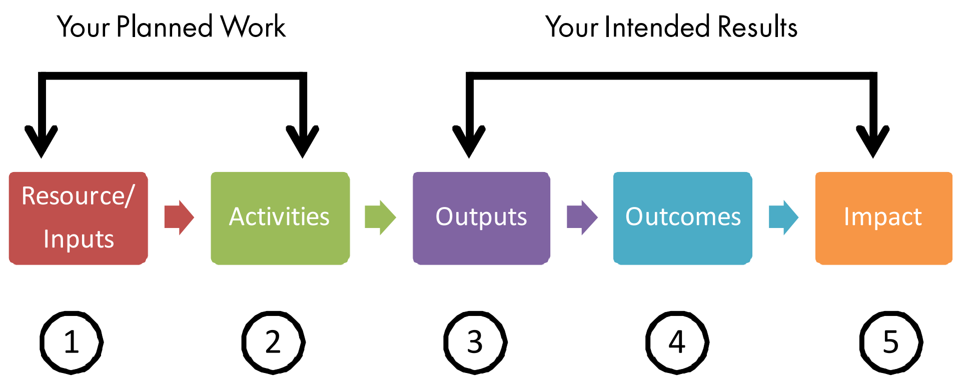

Figure 3. Logic model.

Evaluation Questions

Being clear about what questions you want your evaluation to answer is the key to getting an evaluation that meets your needs (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). By looking at your logic model and your NSTTAC team planning tool, you should be able to list what questions your evaluation needs to answer and methods that may be appropriate for answering them. For example if your goal is to increase attendance of parents at your transition fair by 30%, you need to ask the question of how much did parent attendance increase at the fair and then compare this year's attendance with last year's attendance; to help with this measure, you may want to utilize a sign-in sheet. If your goal is to increase parental knowledge of post-secondary options for their child, you will need to ask a question that encompasses how many post-secondary options parents are knowledgeable about and follow that with some sort of survey or questionnaire to parents. Table 1 illustrates some general evaluation questions associated with the four SPP/APR transition indicators. Further, the state planning tool examples provided in Sections 4—8 provide specific reflective evaluation questions for each of the five taxonomy categories.

Evaluation Methods

Quantitative and qualitative methods represent the two basic approaches for organizing and analyzing evaluation data—strong evaluations include both methods. Quantitative evaluations are objective in nature and generally focus

Table 1. Data Collection Methods

Method	Prep Time	Partici-pant Time	Analysis Time	Usefulness	Uses
Attendance Sheets	Low	Low	Low	Low	To Count number of participants at an event
Documents and checklists	Low	Low	Low-moderate	Low-moderate	Quick feedback from a large group
Surveys	Moderate	Low-moderate	Low-moderate	Moderate	Ability to gain information from a large group in a limited amount of time
Pre and post testing	Moderate	Low-moderate	Low-high	Moderate	To assess learning that takes place from a training or over a period of time
Observations	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate-high	An unbiased approach to gain insight on a phenomenon
Interviews	Moderate-high	Moderate	Moderate-high	Moderate-high	In-depth information for a small group of participants
Focus groups	Moderate-high	Moderate	Moderate-high	High	In-depth information from a moderate group of participants
Testimonials	Low	Moderate	Low	Low-moderate	In-depth information from a select group of participants
Case study	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	In-depth information from select individuals
Follow-up needs assessment	Moderate-high	Low	High	High	Provides more in-depth information than found while using other methods

on numbers and frequencies that lead to statistical analyses or comparisons. Qualitative evaluations are rich with descriptions and personal meaning and lead to deeper understanding for those doing the evaluating. Qualitative methods are often used in evaluations because they tell the program's story by capturing and communicating the participants' stories (Patton, 2003, p. ii). While each of these approaches is acceptable, you need to decide what is most appropriate for answering your evaluation questions. Often, a mixed-methods evaluation using both quantitative and qualitative components will lead to a more complete understanding of what is working and what isn't. Examples and characteristics of evaluation methods are presented in Table 1. Throughout this toolkit, we provide examples of both quantitative and qualitative tools such as samples of surveys, interview and focus group protocols, checklists, and pre and posttests.

Checklists

Checklists are a way to gain information from a large group quickly. Stufflebeam (2001) states "sound checklists can have profound evaluative applications" (p. 71). Although checklists may be just check the box (see Figure 4), Scriven (2007) notes that a criteria of merit checklist (COMlist) is the most powerful form of checklist. He outlines the key criteria for a sound COMlist as:

- The checkpoints should refer to criteria and not mere indicators.
- The list should be complete (no significant omissions).
- The items should be contiguous, i.e., non-overlapping.
- The criteria should be commensurable.
- The criteria should be clear.
- The list should be concise.
- The criteria should be confirmable (e.g., measurable) (Scriven, 2007, p. 3).

Which of the following breakout sessions did you find useful? (check all that apply)		
☐ Student-led IEPs	☐ Getting parents involved	☐ Interagency collaboration
☐ School dropout rates	☐ Monitoring I-13	☐ Initiative in Fairview County

Figure 4. Example of a simple checklist.

When identifying the difference between criteria and indicators, "the key question to ask is this: What properties are parts of the concept (the meaning) of 'a good X,' for someone who is an expert on Xs" (Scriven, 2007, p. 7). Figure 5 is an example of a partial COMlist.

Surveys

Surveys are one of the most popular methods of information collection. They allow for collecting information in a confidential, systematic, and standardized manner. Surveys may be handed out in paper format, mailed, taken over the telephone, or filled out electronically via email or webpage. Questions to ask when making a decision on the type of survey to conduct include:

- Who is your audience and what is the best way to reach them?
- Do you want to capitalize on respondents who are already available (e.g., parent-teacher conferences or a professional development workshop)?
- Do you need immediate feedback?
- What types and how sensitive are the questions?
- Do your participants have characteristics that lead to one form of survey or another (e.g., no internet in the home, no telephone, transient populations, or low literacy skills)?
- Do your participants have a vested interest in your survey?
- What resources are available (e.g., money for mailing or people to call)?

Checklist of Teaching and Learning Practices for Team Teaching	
☐ Teacher-student ratio	The teacher-student ratio for inclusive team-taught classrooms is sufficiently low to provide adequate technical and classroom management support while engaging in learning tasks
☐ Planning time to develop lessons	Teachers have adequate planning time to rethink lesson design to take advantage of team-taught classrooms
☐ Access to concrete lesson ideas	Strategies and structures exist to facilitate the sharing of high quality lessons that can be applied to classrooms with students of all levels

Figure 5. Example of a COMlist.

After determining your audience and type of survey, the next step is creating the questionnaire. Questions need to be written concisely with the end in mind. Remember, people are busy and time is precious, so adequate questions need to be asked to gain the information, but not so many as to create "survey fatigue". Decide how many open-ended, short-answer, and rating scales you need.

For the most reliable surveys, rating scales should be consistent across all sections. For example, if in one section you are rating agreement regarding an outcome using a Likert-like scale of 5 4 3 2 1, with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree, then in another section you are rating internet usage also with a Likert-like scale, that section needs to also read 5 4 3 2 1 rather than 1 2 3 4 5. In addition the value of 5 needs to correspond to the greatest number of hours and the value of 1 with the least number of hours (see Figure 6).

After creating the survey, it is prudent to pilot test it with a small group of respondents similar to your potential respondents. During the pilot test, the participants should be allowed the opportunity to comment on the survey instrument. The pilot test can answer the following questions:

- Do respondents understand the directions and interpret the questions similarly?
- Does the survey elicit the type of data you need?

Items	Scale				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Legislation has been developed to improve services to persons with disabilities because of the efforts of the interagency team	5	4	3	2	1
	20+ hours	15-20 hours	10-15 hours	5-10 hours	0-5 hours
The amount of time I use the internet to collaborate with other agencies on a monthly basis	5	4	3	2	1

Figure 6. Example of Likert-like rating scale.

- How long does the survey take to answer and are your respondents showing survey fatigue?
- What feedback do the respondents have for improving your survey instrument?

Finally, make a plan of encouragement for responding. A survey must have a good response rate in order to produce accurate, useful results; lower response rates increase the amount of potential bias in your results. Maybe your participants are passionate about the subject and will yield a high response rate, but if not how will you increase the likelihood of a response? Some ideas for increasing the number of responders include:

- Make it convenient to fill out (provide time, pencils, and an easy way to turn it in).
- Make it relevant (tell them what's in it for them or what happens to the results).
- Use several methods (paper and internet).
- Send follow-up reminders.
- Allow some open-ended questions.
- When possible, personalize the survey invitation.
- Be clear about confidentiality and data security.
- Publish your results or offer to give results to respondents.
- Use a pre-incentive (guilt works!).
- Use a post-incentive (money, gift card, tickets, drawings, think outside the box and offer things that are relevant to the participant: a drawing for the principal to teach your class for an hour, shaving a teacher's head, getting the school band to play on your lawn, give a student a free day from homework).
- Personally thank the responder.

Interviews

Interviews are useful when pursuing in-depth information around a topic and are extremely helpful when exploring differences between experiences and outcomes. Kvale (1996) explains that a qualitative interview is used to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences" (pp. 1-2). Interviews may be a stand-alone evaluation method or be used as follow-up to further investigate participant responses to a survey. Interviews may be conducted face-to-face, over the telephone, or over the internet. Interviews may be informal with no standard questions, semi-structured with open-ended questions that allow for further probing, or structured with the same questions asked of all participants allowing for increased ability to analyze and compare responses. Interviews generally require a signed informed consent and/or parental consent if you are interviewing minors, and are usually recorded (which needs to be disclosed and participant approval gained).

When designing your interview, an interview protocol or script will help you succeed in gathering the information you need. In addition to the actual interview questions, an interview protocol typically provides the time, date, and name of interviewee; briefly introduces the interviewer; tells why you are conducting the interview and what you plan to do with the information; and insures confidentiality At a minimum, plan for the interview to last 30 minutes, although most thorough interviews tend to range between 45 and 60 minutes in duration. Some things to keep in mind about interviewing include:

- Turn on your recording device.
- Be friendly and establish rapport.
- Start your interview with basic information to gain the trust and comfort of the interviewee.
- Be considerate of time, location, and sensitivity of the questions.
- Take notes during the interview even if you are recording.
- Besides noting what is said, it may be relevant to note body language, non-verbal cues, signs of frustration or enthusiasm, and any interruptions that occur.
- Don't offer your own opinion—remain neutral.
- Have interviewees define any acronyms or terms you don't understand.
- Probe into answers, ask for clarification, details, and examples.
- At the conclusion ask if there was anything left out they want to add.
- Thank the interviewee.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a form of interviewing that capitalizes on small group interaction, usually 4 to 12 participants, to generate knowledge. In focus groups, people are encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, and explore each other's experiences and points of view. By becoming active, participants are empowered in the analysis process, which generally creates larger buy-in for the issue at hand.

Much like interviews, the focus group requires a detailed moderator's guide with similar question focus, but question structure is designed to encourage interaction of participants. There is no set rule for how many focus groups are required to ensure you have not missed any information, but two is generally the minimum. However, if only two groups are conducted, the results may be biased and not capture all the pertinent information.

When looking at costs and resources, focus groups are relatively inexpensive for the number of people interviewed. Enough time needs to be set aside for thorough discussion with two hours being the norm. The environment should be friendly, open, and comfortable with seating arranged for participants to see each other. If the group needs to include hard-to-reach populations some ideas to increase participation include:

- Provide free on-site child care.
- Provide free transportation.
- Time it around your participants' schedules.
- Include incentives such as gift cards or a drawing.
- Provide food or snacks for group members and any children they bring.

Evaluation Analysis

Once the evaluation plan has been designed and data are collected, the information must be analyzed, interpreted for meaning, and shared with others. When analyzing data, always start with a review of your evaluation goals to help you organize your data and focus your analysis.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data require some number crunching. If you kept your analysis simple, the first step will be to report descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means. The W.K Kellogg Foundation (1998) notes:

> Remember that we want evaluation to support programs and help them improve. Complex statistical analyses of a well-designed experimental investigation that does not lead to improvements are less desirable than a thorough but simple statistical analysis of existing tracking records that leads to positive changes in both the program and in the tracking system (p. 88).

Depending on the complexity of your analysis, you may need to use a software program like Excel, SPSS, or SAS, or you may be able to use only a calculator.

Recommendations for analyzing quantitative data include:

- Check your data for accuracy and eliminate, set to missing, or if possible correct obvious errors (e.g., you are interested in means and a teacher answers he sees 10,000 students a day).
- Allow sufficient time to conduct thoughtful and in-depth analyses.
- Use the right software by matching your study with team member skills.
- Seek outside assistance when you need specialized knowledge.
- Use analyses that best inform your work.
- Disaggregate your data into meaningful subgroups.

Qualitative Data

Like quantitative data, narrative evidence needs to be summarized to be useful to stakeholders. Qualitative data include information gathered from observation notes, interviews, focus groups, written documents or journals, and open-ended survey questions. Information is found in the form of lengthy narratives, field notes, or in some cases need to be transcribed from recorded sessions. The process of transcribing and coding data may be a lengthy process and time needs to be embedded into your evaluation plans. However, the results are invaluable and well worth the effort.

Categorization and coding require simply examining the data or conducting a content analysis of your transcripts, notes, and documents for emerging patterns and themes. These are categorized into reoccurring topics, assessed for fit, and matched to your evaluation questions. Although using categorization techniques is a powerful way to document patterns and themes in a program, unless used with contextualization techniques which focus more on how things fit together, categorizing can lead to premature generalizations about the program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 89). Software programs are available to aid in this process, but it is important to include human understanding and intuition in the final analysis by personally reading and reflecting on the narratives.

Strategies for Reporting Results

The communication of findings and insights is an important piece of your evaluation. Unfortunately, reporting evaluation findings is an often forgotten component of improvement. We especially want to encourage you to share your evaluation with your various stakeholders. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (n.d.) tells us:

> Reporting is the establishment of a consistent and interactive communication system between the evaluation team and relevant stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Besides increasing ownership and motivation to act on what is learned, this system will also assist in refining the evaluation design, questions, methods, and interpretations (¶ 1).

Reporting may take the form of a formal evaluation report or a short presentation at a parent meeting. A formal evaluation report should include the following:

- Executive summary.
- Background and purpose.
- Evaluation methods.
- Results.
- Discussion, conclusions, and recommendations (may be one section or broken apart).
- References.
- Appendices.

The executive summary is a short section, usually 2 to 10 pages at the beginning of the report. It provides a brief picture of the program, includes the evaluation questions, data collection methods, and the most significant evaluation findings and recommendations. The background and purpose describes the history and mission of the organization with a brief description section of the project or program you are evaluating, its purpose, participants, and funders. It also defines the purpose of the evaluation and identifies the target population. A section should include the evaluation methods, ideally with enough detail so the methods may be replicated. In this section, include information on the data collection procedures: instruments used, timing and frequency, from whom the data were collected, sampling procedures, data sources (records, questionnaires, interviews, etc.), and who was responsible for data collection. The results section presents the findings from your data. Organize your data in a way that reaches your audience. Graphics are particularly powerful for communicating your findings, but use them with discretion to increase their effectiveness. For example, pie charts for answers on 20 separate questions on a survey will not be as effective (and may create reader fatigue) as one or two bar charts. Finally a discussion, conclusions, and recommendation section helps to determine the "what worked, what didn't, and why". This section also guides future work. Remember to interpret your results based on your original evaluation questions and goals. Keep in mind that unexpected results often are the most interesting. The CDC (2006) reminds us:

> Moving from data to recommendations can be difficult. It is critical to identify different audiences in the early stages of the evaluation to determine what information is relevant to them, so that your recommendations can be adopted. Making realistic recommendations requires not only the input of the evaluator and program staff, but also primary decision makers, who will use the results to generate their own recommendations (p. 2).

We have included templates in the CD to help you report your successes including a formal evaluation report, a PowerPoint presentation, and poster presentation templates.

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NSTTAC Capacity Building Model

NSTTAC Capacity Building Model Examples

24

Title: 2009 NSTTAC Indicator 13 Checklist

Evaluation example: Data collection instrument

Context for use: This checklist is used by compliance and monitoring personnel, as well as teachers, administrators and other educators, to determine if students' IEPs include information required by IDEA and the SPP/APR Indicator 13.

Protocol for use: This checklist can be used during monitoring visits, as a professional development tool, or by educators to evaluate the existence of Indicator 13 components in IEPs. The data collected from this checklist can provide information for the SPP/APR reports required by the federal government.

Title:	Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Evaluation planning tool
Context for use:	Use to plan evaluation of professional development activities
Protocol for use:	This tool should be used by administrators, educators, and technical assistance providers as a framework for planning and evaluating professional development regarding evidenced-based strategies and practices.

Title:	Extending Research to Practice: School and Agency Policies that Influence Provision of Transition Education and Services
Evaluation example:	Policy analysis
Context for use:	Initial phases of policy analysis
Protocol for use:	This document identifies policies that affect the implementation of evidence-based transition education and services. It can be used as a "conversation starter" with administrators, policy makers, and other educational stakeholders to begin discussion about the practices in place and how school and agency policies influence their implementation.

Title:	Framework for Analyzing Transition-Related Policy Instruments
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Initial and developing phases of transition-related policy analysis
Protocol for use:	This data collection instrument is used to record and organize information about a variety of transition-related policies at the federal, state, and local levels that influence transition education and services. The findings generated can be used to inform policy change or new policy development.

Title:	Young Adult Transition Programs Planning Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Technical assistance evaluation
Context for use:	Evaluate technical assistance provided at the local district level
Protocol for use:	District teams consisting of special educators and other education personnel participated in a two-day concept mapping process to develop a detailed conceptual model of their young adult transition programs. Participants completed the evaluation at the conclusion of the process.

Taxonomy for Transition Programming: Team Planning Tool for Improving Transition Education and Services

Title: Taxonomy for Transition Programming: Team Planning Tool for Improving Transition Education and Services

Evaluation example: Planning tool

Context for use: Transition institute or meeting with school-community teams

Protocol for use: This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Student-Focused Planning Evaluation Examples

Title:	Colorado Transition Institute 2008 Team Planning Tool for Student-focused Planning
Evaluation example:	Planning tool
Context for use:	Transition institute with school-community teams
Protocol for use:	This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education regarding student-focused planning. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Title:	Evaluation Tools for Implementing Student Involvement Curricula
Evaluation example:	Overview and instructions for a set of evaluation instruments
Context for use:	A set of educator evaluation tools for documenting curriculum implementation and outcomes
Protocol for use:	The overview and instructions should be used in advance of the curriculum implementation.

Title:	Tool 1: Educator Implementation Information — Student Involvement and Self-Determination Curriculum
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Form for educators to describe the curriculum implementation, including lesson modification and barriers encountered
Protocol for use:	Tool should be completed during and after the curriculum is implemented.

Title:	Tool 2: Student Demographic Information—Student Involvement and Self-Determination Curriculum
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Form for educators to document demographic information about students who participated in the curriculum
Protocol for use:	Tool should be completed after the curriculum has been implemented.

Title:	Tool 3: Educator Information on Student Involvement in Their IEP Meeting
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Form for educators to document information about the student's involvement in his/her IEP meeting
Protocol for use:	Tool should be completed at the conclusion of the IEP meeting.

Title:	Tool 4: Student Feedback Tool—Student Involvement in the IEP Meeting
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Tool for students to provide information about their involvement in their IEP meeting
Protocol for use:	This tool should be completed by the student at the conclusion of the IEP meeting.

Title:	Tool 5: Parent/Guardian/Family Feedback Form-Student Involvement in his/her IEP Meeting
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Form for parent/guardian/family member to provide information about their student's involvement in the IEP meeting
Protocol for use:	This form should be completed by the parent/guardian/family member at the conclusion of the IEP meeting.

Title:	Assessment of Student Involvement in Transition Planning
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Form for educator to document information about the involvement of a student in his/her IEP meeting
Protocol for use:	This form should be completed at the conclusion of the IEP meeting.

Title:	Using Transition Assessment Results to Build a Transition-Rich IEP
Evaluation example:	Overall workshop evaluation
Context for use:	Two-day workshop for special educators and other service providers
Protocol for use:	Participants complete evaluation at the conclusion of the event.

Title:	Using Transition Assessment Results to Build a Transition-Rich IEP—Gathering Data Regarding Indicator 13: Checklist for Reviewing IEPs
Evaluation example:	Pretest and posttest
Context for use:	Two-day workshop for special educators and other service providers
Protocol for use:	Prior to the workshop, participants are instructed to bring a sample student IEP, with identifying information "blacked" out. At the beginning of the workshop before any content is provided, the participants are given the NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist. Participants choose a code name to record on both their pre and posttests to ensure anonymity. Using the pretest checklist, they evaluate the transition components in their sample IEP. This pretest is collected before the content begins. At the conclusion of the workshop, the participants are instructed to rewrite the transition areas of their IEP and to use a new checklist with the same code name to evaluate their changes. The posttest checklist and the IEP are collected. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if content of the IEP improved.

Title: Using Transition Assessment Results to Build a Transition-Rich IEP

Evaluation example: Pretest and posttest

Context for use: Two-day workshop for special educators and other service providers

Protocol for use: Using several key objectives of the workshop, create a pretest for the participants to complete at the beginning of the workshop. Participants use a code name on their test to ensure anonymity. At the conclusion of the day(s), the participants complete a posttest with the same questions as the pretest, using the same code name. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Title:	Using the NSTTAC Indicator 13 Checklist to Measure the Effectiveness of IEP Forms
Evaluation example:	Data collection tool
Context for use:	Tool to be used by educators, administrators, and other service providers to determine if their district IEP form includes the required Indicator 13 components
Protocol for use:	This form can be used after an IEP is reviewed with the Indicator 13 checklist to determine if the IEP contains the required transition components.

Note. The evaluation example included here uses the 2006 – 2008 version of the NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist. In 2009, OSEP revised Indicator 13; the changes are effective with the 2010 data collection. From this point on, the 2009 NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist should be used with this and other evaluation examples and activities; it is included in Section 2 of this toolkit.

Title:	Student Involvement in Educational and Transition Planning
Evaluation example:	Overall workshop evaluation
Context for use:	One-day workshop for special educators and other service providers
Protocol for use:	Participants complete the evaluation at the conclusion of the event.

Title:	Student Involvement in Educational and Transition Planning
Evaluation example:	Pretest and posttest
Context for use:	One-day workshop for special educators and other service providers
Protocol for use:	Using several key objectives of the workshop, create a pretest for the participants to complete at the beginning of the workshop. Participants use a code name on their test to ensure anonymity. At the conclusion of the day(s), the participants complete a posttest with the same questions as the pretest, using the same code name. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Student Development Evaluation Examples

Title:	Colorado Transition Institute 2007 Team Planning Tool for Student Development
Evaluation example:	Planning tool
Context for use:	Transition institute with school-community teams
Protocol for use:	This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education regarding student development. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Title:	Job Readiness Workshop
Evaluation example:	Pretest and posttest
Context for use:	One-day workshop for high school students
Protocol for use:	Several key objectives are identified and used to create a pretest for the participants to complete at the beginning of the workshop. Participants use a code name on their test to ensure anonymity. At the conclusion of the day(s), the participants complete a posttest with the same questions as the pretest, using the same code name. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Title:	Life Skills, Safety, and Social Skills in Transition Planning
Evaluation example:	Overall workshop evaluation
Context for use:	One-day workshop for special educators and other service providers
Protocol for use:	Participants complete the evaluation at conclusion of the event.

Title: Life Skills, Safety, and Social Skills in Transition Planning

Evaluation example: Pretest and posttest

Context for use: One-day workshop for special educators and other service providers

Protocol for use: Several key objectives are identified and used to create a pretest for the participants to complete at the beginning of the workshop. Participants use a code name on their test to ensure anonymity. At the conclusion of the day(s), the participants complete a posttest with the same questions as the pretest, using the same code name. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Interagency Collaboration Evaluation Examples

Title:	Arkansas Transition Summit 2008 Team Planning Tool for Student-focused Planning and Interagency Collaboration
Evaluation example:	Planning tool
Context for use:	Transition institute with school-community teams
Protocol for use:	This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education regarding student-focused planning and interagency collaboration. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Title:	Sample Transition Services Database
Evaluation example:	Spreadsheet for recording and analyzing data
Context for use:	Teachers and service providers use the spreadsheet for tracking students' service needs, agency referrals, and services provided; these data are helpful for determining met and unmet service needs
Protocol for use:	This tool can be used to track students' needs identified in their IEP, agency referrals, and service provision. When used to project service needs, these data are useful in strategic planning.

Family Involvement Evaluation Examples

Title:	Oklahoma Transition Institute 2008 Team Planning Tool for Family Involvement and Program Characteristics
Evaluation example:	Planning tool
Context for use:	Transition institute with school-community teams
Protocol for use:	This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education regarding family involvement and program characteristics. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Title:	Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP): Focus Group Development Questionnaire—Parents
Evaluation example:	Pilot questionnaire for developing a focus group script
Context for use:	This questionnaire can be used by an educational evaluation team to test potential focus group questions
Protocol for use:	This questionnaire is used by evaluators interested in conducting parent focus groups. The questionnaire is provided to a group of parents for their review and critique. The evaluator reviews the feedback and uses it to construct the final focus group script.

Title:	CIMP Parent Questionnaire
Evaluation example:	Questionnaire
Context for use:	As part of a state or district CIMP process, the questionnaire is used to gather information from parents, prior to the focus group discussion
Protocol for use:	To gather demographic and other information about their experiences, this questionnaire is completed by a group of parents before they participate in the focus group.

Title:	CIMP Parent Focus Group Script
Evaluation example:	Focus group script
Context for use:	Used by the facilitator(s) to conduct and manage the flow of a focus group discussion
Protocol for use:	This script is used by the focus group facilitator to provide a structure for the discussion. A script helps ensure all questions are asked and provides consistency across groups.

Title:	New Mexico Informal Family Forum
Evaluation example:	Discussion questions
Context for use:	Informal family forum held in conjunction with a regional transition or transition cadre meeting
Protocol for use:	Regional or transition cadre meetings can provide opportunities to gather information from students and families in the geographical area where the meeting is held. These questions can be used to foster discussion about students' preparation for their post-school lives, information useful for those planning and implementing transition education and services.

Title:	Kansas, OK Vocational Technical Center: Family Transition Night
Evaluation example:	Event evaluation
Context for use:	This evaluation is completed by parents during a family transition night to get their feedback on content and to assess their pre and post knowledge of the topics presented.
Protocol for use:	This evaluation is provided to participants at the beginning of the transition fair, to be completed by the end of the event. Incentives for completing the evaluation (e.g., gas cards, gift certificates, etc.) can be an effective method of increasing the response rate.

Program Structures Evaluation Examples

Title:	New Mexico Summer Transition Institute 2004 Team Planning Tool for Program Structures and Characteristics
Evaluation example:	Planning tool
Context for use:	Transition institute with school-community teams
Protocol for use:	This planning tool focuses on assisting school-community teams to review and plan their strategies for implementing transition-focused education regarding program structures and practices. It can be used annually to reflect upon effectiveness of practices, determine strengths and needs, and develop plans; as well as during the year as a formative evaluation tool.

Title:	Transition-Related Legislation Quiz
Evaluation example:	Pretest and posttest
Context for use:	Test is used at the beginning and end of a content session regarding transition legislation
Protocol for use:	Participants complete test before and after content session. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Title:	Self-Assessment: Ability to Implement Professional Development
Evaluation example:	Self-assessment
Context for use:	Assessment can be used with a variety of educational professionals, particularly those responsible for providing transition-related professional development.
Protocol for use:	Assessment is used when planning professional development, as a measure of strengths and potential issues to be addressed.

Title:	Self-Assessment: Knowledge of Transition-Related Services
Evaluation example:	Self-assessment
Context for use:	Assessment can be used with a variety of educational professionals
Protocol for use:	Assessment is used to identify professional development needs, or as a measure of participant knowledge before planning content.

Title:	Self-Assessment: Knowledge of Transition Practices Content
Evaluation example:	Pretest and posttest
Context for use:	Assessment can be used with a variety of educational professionals and/or transition service providers
Protocol for use:	Participants complete test before and after content session. The evaluator scores each participant's tests and compares the scores to determine if participants' knowledge of the content changed.

Title:	Strategic Planning for Transition Services and Education
Evaluation example:	Overall event evaluation
Context for use:	One-day strategic planning meeting with district level transition teams
Protocol for use:	Participants complete evaluation at the conclusion of the meeting.

Title:	SPP Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14: Understanding National, State, and Local Needs
Evaluation example:	Overall event evaluation
Context for use:	One-day workshop for district-level transition teams
Protocol for use:	Participants complete evaluation at the conclusion of the event.

Title:	Arkansas Transition Unit Strategic Planning
Evaluation example:	Overall event evaluation
Context for use:	One-day strategic planning meeting for state transition team
Protocol for use:	Participants complete evaluation at the conclusion of the event.

Title:	Oklahoma Transition Institute: Facilitator Preparation Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Professional development evaluation
Context for use:	Evaluation of participants' preparation to facilitate a team during a state transition institute
Protocol for use:	To assess the effectiveness of their preparation to facilitate a team, participants complete the evaluation at the conclusion of the institute.

Title:	Third Annual Oklahoma Transition Institute Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Overall event evaluation
Context for use:	Two-day institute for local and district teams of transition educators and service providers to assess and plan transition education and services
Protocol for use:	Participants complete the evaluation at the conclusion of the institute.

Title:	Secondary Transition State Planning Institute: Building for the Future—Facilitator Preparation Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Professional development evaluation
Context for use:	Evaluation of participants' preparation to facilitate a state team during a national transition institute
Protocol for use:	To assess the effectiveness of their preparation to facilitate the work of a state team, participants complete the evaluation at the conclusion of the institute.

Title:	Secondary Transition State Planning Institute: Building for the Future Evaluation
Evaluation example:	Overall event evaluation
Context for use:	Three-day institute for state teams of transition educators and service providers to assess and develop state capacity-building plans
Protocol for use:	Participants complete the evaluation at the conclusion of the institute.

Strategies for Reporting Results

Title:	Checklist for Identifying and Evaluating Program Goals, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes
Evaluation example:	Example of criteria to use when developing program goals, activities, and other aspects of your program logic model
Context for use:	Educational personnel can use this checklist in all aspects of program development and evaluation
Protocol for use:	This checklist is used when evaluating taxonomy plans, reviewing progress toward goals, or to establish evaluations of program goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Title:	Taxonomy for Transition Programming: Examples for Planning and Evaluating Goals, Activities, and Outcomes
Evaluation example:	Examples of goals, activities, and outcomes in the various taxonomy areas
Context for use:	Example of goals, activities, and outcomes to use when developing your program goals, activities, and other aspects of your program logic model
Protocol for use:	These examples are used to plan transition education and services using the *Taxonomy for Transition Planning*, review progress of goals, or to establish evaluations of program goals, activities, and outputs.

Title: Implementing Transition—Focused Education: Reporting Program Outcomes–Planning Form

Evaluation example: Evaluation planning form

Context for use: This form can be used by educational personnel to plan evaluation of transition program areas

Protocol for use: This form is used to evaluate or review progress toward goals, or to establish evaluations of program goals, activities, and outputs.

Title:	Reporting Transition Practices Achievements
Evaluation example:	Example of method for reporting achievements to stakeholders
Context for use:	Use this form to collect and identify progress on transition program goals
Protocol for use:	This form is used to evaluate or review progress of goals, to identify continued areas of need, and/or to report progress to other stakeholders.

Title:	Transition Activities–Report of Program Outcomes
Evaluation example:	Report template for summarizing goals, activities, outputs, evidence, and outcomes
Context for use:	Use to present summary of program development and evaluation activities and findings
Protocol for use:	This template is aligned with the *Taxonomy* team planning tools. It is used to summarize the goals, activities, outputs, evidence, and outcomes achieved during the year. It provides a comprehensive, structured format that can be used alone or to inform a descriptive evaluation report.

Title:	Implementing Transition-Focused Education: Evaluation Report Template
Evaluation example:	Example of an evaluation report template
Context for use:	Educational personnel can use this form to compile information from an evaluation in a comprehensive and concise format.
Protocol for use:	This template is used to present evaluation results or information to other stakeholders.