

Needs Assessment Process

Conceptual Framework:

1. Engage Stakeholders

- To identify desired outcomes
- To identify mandates
- To assess strength
- To examine capacity
- To select priorities
- To seek resources
- To set performance objectives
- To develop an action plan
- To allocate resources
- To monitor progress for impact on outcomes

2. Assess needs and identify desired outcomes and mandates using indicators, using qualitative and quantitative data

- To identify community system needs and desired outcomes by specific population groups
- To identify legislative, political, community-driven, financial, or other internal and external mandates irrespective of what the needs assess reveals

3. Examine strengths and capacity

- To assess state's current resources
- To assess state's current activities
- To assess state's current services
- To assess anticipated outcomes to better understand the relationship of existing programs/systems capacity to identify strength and needs of state and it's jurisdiction revealing the strength and weaknesses in capacity not previously identified

4. Select Priorities

- To examine the needs identified and match the needs to desired outcomes, required mandates and level of existing capacity
- To select the most important or highest priority inclusive of being reasonable to maintain, modify, or enhance existing interventions, initiatives, or systems that have been successful, or begin new interventions, initiatives, or systems that are expected to result in needed improvements

5. Seek Resources

- To seek additional resources, funds or authority from state legislature or funding agencies in order to address priority areas

6. Set performance objectives

- To select performance measures
- To set outcome measure targets
- To set performance measure targets

7. Develop action plan

- To identify activities to address priority strengths and needs
- To describe activities that have been identified by the four pyramid levels

8. Allocate resources

- To focus on the funding planned activities
- To include action plan, current budgets, political priorities, and partnerships

9. Monitor progress for impact on outcomes

- To monitor and examine states effort to see if there has been any improvements of the inputs and other quantitative and qualitative information
- To be prepared for potential outcomes of shifting resources, to address current levels of performance and availability of resources
- To entertain feedback loops between various stages of the process allowing continuous input and re-evaluation of the outputs

10. Report back to Stakeholders

- To assure accountability to Stakeholders and partners who are involved in the needs assessment process
- To ensure and assure continued involvement of all Stakeholders and partners in the ongoing needs assessment process

General questions:

- What specific data is needed to help you in your work?
- Was there helpful data previously collected that is no longer collected? Could it be useful again?
- What would be the most important messages in a statewide media campaign regarding early childhood issues?
- What would you say is the single greatest accomplishment of the HNDECA effort since its inception?
- What can the ECCS Grant/HNDECA do to better assist you in systems change/systems collaboration?
- How can state agencies do a better job of collaborating with each other on early childhood issues? How can they better collaborate with the private sector and advocates?
- What can be done to include more early childhood advocates in policy making?
- How can HNDECA improve meetings and networking opportunities for its members?
- How can HNDECA improve inter-meeting communication to keep HNDECA members connected and aware of each others work?
- Are there others who should be invited to participate in HNDECA? Who are they?
- What can be done to make HNDECA and its sub-committees more culturally diverse?

Questions based on the 5 core areas of ECCS work:

For Early Care & Education

- What is the best way for the Governor to appoint his Children's Cabinet (or whatever it is called)?
- What should the primary functions of that group be?
- What ideas do you have for connecting HNDECA to this appointed group?
- How can we assure proper use/implementation of the Early Learning Guidelines?
- How can we assure proper use/implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for childcare?

For Parent Education

- What pilot project ideas do you have for reducing/eliminating stigma about parent education?
- What is needed to increase the number of home visiting parent education programs?
- How can we assure that tribal communities are receiving parenting education in a culturally appropriate manner?

For Access to Health Insurance and Medical Home

- What are your ideas for reaching policy makers about health insurance for children?
- What is the biggest barrier for families seeking a medical home for their child?
- What is the best way to reach physicians and other medical professionals to teach them about medical home?

- How does medical home ultimately save money in the long run?

For Mental Health

- What is the best way to eliminate stigma about mental health issues in children?
- What data regarding out-of-home placements due to mental health/social/behavioral issues would be helpful in your work?
- What is needed to assure that all mental health screenings are evidence-based?
- What is needed to assure quality mental health care is provided to children and families living in rural and remote settings?
- What is needed to increase the prevalence of the positive behavioral supports (PBS) program statewide?
- What additional services are needed in the elementary school setting to improve mental health (prevention and intervention) services for children?

For Family Support

- How can the “experienced parent” program be increased statewide?
- What is needed to better support parent leadership efforts and parents as leaders?
- How can we assure that correct and consistent information is provided to parents by county and state agencies?
- How can we better use parents as teachers for people working in the “systems” of social/human services, childcare or education?