Family Impact Self Assessment: A Checklist for Child Care Center Directors

The purpose of the questions that follow is to identify areas where support for families is strong as well as areas where it could improve. Please rate each item based on your knowledge of the center.

Program Philosophy and Attitudes

The program philosophy—that is, its underlying assumptions about the role of families in child care—affects almost every area of the program’s operations. This philosophy is usually a combination of the assumptions underlying the programs, the operating policies and procedures, and the beliefs of the program administrator and staff. These questions relate to the ways that program philosophy is expressed:

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<tr>
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<th>Strong</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Don’t Know/ Doesn’t Apply</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A statement of program philosophy regarding the role of families exists</td>
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<tr>
<td>The statement of program philosophy is regularly reviewed and updated</td>
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<td>The program philosophy is explained to families at enrollment</td>
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<td>The program philosophy is explained to new employees</td>
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<td>The program has policies regarding confidentiality of records</td>
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<td>The program has policies regarding family access to records</td>
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<td>The program regularly informs parents about their child’s progress</td>
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<td>The program regularly plans and invites families to special activities</td>
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<td>Policies exist regarding how staff should respond to uninvolved parents</td>
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<td>When parents seem resistant or are otherwise unavailable, procedures are in place for involving other members of the family</td>
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<tr>
<td>When parents seem to need support, policies are in place for connecting them to community resources</td>
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Enrollment Procedures and Processes

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<tr>
<td>Information about the family is asked for in the first contact</td>
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<td>Information about the family is requested on the enrollment form</td>
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<td>Parents are told how the family will be involved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents are told what services and information they can expect</td>
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<tr>
<td>All family members are invited to the first meeting with the child</td>
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<td>Absent parents are encouraged to be involved</td>
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## Family Data

Please rate how well the following information is gathered at enrollment.

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- The significant family members in the child’s life—both immediate family and extended family
- The current physical health and emotional/social functioning of members of the family
- The role of the important family members in the child’s life, identifying positive and negative influences
- The family’s social network and degree of social support
- Organizations or individuals that are important to the family (including church)
- Family’s relationship to the school or other relevant agencies
- Recent family events or crises
- Family’s relationship to the older generation
- The extent of involvement of the older generation with the child
- Sources of family stress (e.g., health, workplace, unemployment, and divorce)
- Sources of family strength
- Family problems that need to be addressed or referred elsewhere
- Other relatives who might be involved if parents are unavailable at any time

## Administrative and Organizational Issues

### Staffing

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- Professional background or experience the program staff have in working directly with families
- The extent that the staff’s racial/ethnic background mirrors that of the children
- Acknowledgement of staff’s efforts to connect with families
- The weight given to work with family members in staff performance evaluations

### Staff Training and Consultation

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- Regular training for the staff on working with families
- Trainings on working with culturally and racially diverse families
- Contacts with other child care centers successful in involving families

### Family-Friendly Facilities

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- Drop-off and pick-up area are convenient, friendly, and attractive for family members
- Private places large enough to talk with several members of a family at one time

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Please add comments or additional details to any answers which you would like to clarify. Give examples of how you think your center supports families and the challenges that you face.
Profile of Family Backgrounds

The place to begin a family impact analysis is to review what is known about the family characteristics, circumstances, and home life of the families currently served by your child care center. Center data may be available to answer some or all of these questions. If not, rely on knowledgeable guesstimates based on your experience.

What is the family structure breakdown of your current client population?

- % of families married
- % of families divorced
- % of families separated
- % of families remarried
- % of families never married

What is the breakdown of living arrangements for children at the center?

- % of children living with one or both parents
- % of children living with other relatives
- % of children living in foster care
- % of children living in other nonfamilial care

What is the racial/ethnic composition of the children at the center?

- % of children who are American Indian or Alaska Native
- % of children who are Asian
- % of children who are Black or African American
- % of children who are Hispanic
- % of children who Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- % of children who are White (not Hispanic)
- % of children who are of other racial/ethnic composition

For those racial/ethnic minority groups that you indicated above, what training has the staff received to help them learn more about these cultures?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

What percentage of the children at the center receive W-2 assistance?

% of children who receive W-2 assistance

What percentage of the children at the center have special needs (e.g., dietary; medications; therapy; cognitive, physical, or emotional challenges)?

% of children with special needs
What stresses are families at the center likely to be dealing with?

_______ % of families currently affected by unemployment
_______ % of families who have experienced serious health problems in the last year
_______ % of families who have adopted a child in the last year
_______ % of families who have divorced within the last year
_______ % of families who have moved to the community within the last year
_______ % of families who have emigrated from another country
_______ % of families who have a member incarcerated
_______ % of families experiencing other changes or stresses (e.g., neighborhood crime and violence, rural isolation, etc.); please describe.

____________________________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________________________
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Are there any special characteristics of the families served by the center? (For example, high proportion of military families, highly mobile families, etc.)

____________________________________________________________________________________
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Have there been any recent changes in the types of families that are served by the center? (Changes in number of immigrant families, unemployed or underemployed families, etc.)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
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Center Director Background

To better understand how child care centers support families, it will help us to know the background of the child care professionals who have participated in the study. Please provide the following information about yourself. Do not include your name on the sheet.

What is your gender?  ☐ Female  ☐ Male

How old are you?  __________

To what racial or ethnic group do you belong?

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native  ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
☐ Asian  ☐ White (not Hispanic)
☐ Black or African American  ☐ Other Racial/Ethnic composition ________________________________
☐ Hispanic

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.

☐ Completed less than 6 years of school  ☐ Some college or technical school  ☐ Other ________________
☐ Completed 7th through 9th grade  ☐ College graduate
☐ Completed 10th or 11th grade  ☐ Some graduate study
☐ High school graduation  ☐ Graduate degree

Please indicate the amount of education you have in the child care field.

☐ Some undergraduate coursework in child care field  ☐ Some graduate coursework in child care field
☐ Bachelor’s degree in child care field  ☐ Graduate degree in child care field
☐ Other child care credentials/certifications ________________________________

Please indicate your years of child care experiences as a professional at the center?  __________

Please indicate your total years of child care experience as a professional including this center and other places of employment.  __________

Currently, how many hours per week do you usually work at the center?  __________

What best describes your primary role at the center?

☐ Teacher or aide for infants  ☐ Teacher or aide for school age children
☐ Teacher or aide for toddlers (1-2 years)  ☐ Administrator
☐ Teacher or aide for preschoolers (3-4 years)  ☐ Multiple roles. Please explain ________________________________
☐ Teacher or aide for 4K program

Do you have a child/children attending the center?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

How many children?  __________

Ages of children: ________________________________

This checklist was developed by Karen Bogenschneider, Professor and UW-Extension Family Policy Specialist; Olivia Little, Project Assistant, UW-Madison; Kathy Hetzel, Dodge County UW-Extension Family Living Educator; and Patti Herman, Columbia County UW-Extension Family Living Educator.

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