**Evaluation: Developing Christ Child Programs that Succeed**

EXPANDED TEXT

Evaluations take many forms, from the formal **Logic Model, (**link to Logic Model information**)** (a visual representation of a program's activities, outputs, and expected outcomes) to capturing anecdotal achievements. The first step is to decide which format works best for the program and will give information

That is useful for improving and sustaining the program. Explore the **Program Evaluation Process** (link to chart) and select the best **Method of Gathering Information for Evaluations. (**link to chart)

**Informal Evaluations: Collecting Anecdotal Data**

Parents, teachers and children can all provide informal or anecdotal feedback, especially in a tutoring, mentoring or literacy program. Such data collection methods range from casual conversation to journals.

Methods for collecting data include:

* *Interviews*. One on one question and answer sessions can elicit information about changes in attitude, skill level and behavior. Each individual should be asked the same questions to maintain consistent data. This is time consuming and should be considered only for a small group.
* *Journals*. Older children can keep a log of their activities with a tutor or mentor along with their reactions to it. Volunteers can also keep a journal.
* *Observation*. The teacher, tutor or mentor can keep a continuing record for each child or for the class as a group. Note such things as changes in attentiveness, increased class participation, or whatever relates to the established goals. Be specific, objective and concrete. The first entry should list the goals and they should be referred to in each entry.

Even though anecdotes and journals are not hard data, they can be interpreted to demonstrate outcomes. For example, 10 of 15 parents report their children read more often at home than they did before involvement with your reading program. Or 70% of the students wrote in their journal that they feel more confident raising their hand in class. Those are successful and quantifiable outcomes.

Volunteers are valuable resources for gathering **anecdotal data** about your program. Ask them to write down stories told to them by clients, students, parents and professional staff. These stories can help assess the success of a program and will prove valuable when doing fund raising and grant writing. Volunteers can also gather anecdotes by asking specific questions, even in casual conversation. For example:

* What have you heard from students/clients this year that indicate our volunteer services made a difference or changed someone’s behavior?
* Did the student/client meet the goals you had set for him? To what degree have the volunteers contributed to that?
* Did any of the students/clients share with you their attitude toward the volunteers?

**Checklists**

Checklists are useful when tracking specific desired changes or progress toward a goal. They can be designed for use by the tutor/mentor/reader, the student, or the teacher. They are also useful for self-esteem or parenting programs. Simply consider the goals set for the program or for the individual child. List them and have the designated person check off if they were accomplished, or rate them from 1 to 5.

In the diagram below (*E1*), the success of a child’s tutoring experience can be evaluated in terms of meeting established goals set by his teacher and shared with both the tutor and child.

5=Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Disagree 2=Strongly Disagree 1=Not applicable

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Student actively engaged in tutoring activities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student’s attitude toward Math improved. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student can interpret simple multiplication story problems. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student learned multiplication tables. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Student completed homework in a timely fashion. |  |  |  |  |  |

*Diagram E1*

In the first example below (*E2*), a mentor was told his mentee needed to work on self-esteem and confidence. At the end of the year, the student was asked to check off those statements that were true. In the second *(E3*), a student evaluated his own progress after working with a tutor.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | I am confident when I speak in class. |
|  | I am happy when I go to school in the morning. |
|  | I enjoy the activities I do with my mentor. |
|  | I ask my teacher for help when I need it. |
|  | I raise my hand sometimes when the teacher asks questions. |
|  | I remember to bring my homework in every day |

*Diagram E2*

Because of my work with my tutor, I am able to:

 get a better grade in Science class.

 complete my homework every day.

 set daily goals for myself.

 manage my time after school.

 ask questions in class.

 turn in neat papers.

*Diagram E3*

**Volunteer Evaluations**

Another way of evaluating a hands-on program is through the satisfaction of the volunteers. If the program draws primarily criticism or quickly loses volunteers, that is an indication that the procedures need to be changed. It is empowering to give volunteers an opportunity to reflect on the significance of their work, their contributions to the program, and the meaningful effect they have on the community.

The following is a sample volunteer survey.

 5 = strongly agree 4= agree 3= Neutral 2= disagree 1= strongly disagree

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The clients/students appreciate the service I provide. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel welcomed and appreciated by the staff of the school/agency… |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel the work I do is important, significant, and has a positive impact. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have the support and guidance I need to succeed. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My volunteer work gives me a sense of accomplishment. |  |  |  |  |  |
| In the past year, I have had the opportunity to learn and grow in my role as a tutor/mentor/story reader… |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have adequate resources to accomplish my tasks and meet my goals. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am using skills I have in doing this volunteer work. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am kept informed about changes in schedule, duties and responsibilities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel empowered to make decisions and choices within established guidelines. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The rules and guidelines for volunteers were clearly outlined. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The program is well organized. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I plan to continue volunteering in the program. |  |  |  |  |  |

 *Diagram E4*

**Evaluation: What Is It Good For?**

Tracking the success and challenge of a program is an important part of any project. Good records as listed below give chapters the ability to account for the program to current funders and to apply for additional funding from new sources. Think of the following suggestions:

* Appoint one well-organized and conscientious volunteer to head-up the tracking and evaluation mechanisms of the project.
* Track outcomes through a user-friendly feedback method from participants as well as volunteers.
* Evaluations could be as simple as a one page written survey or as detailed as an on-line response model, of which there are many readily and nominally available on the internet.
* Consider asking partnering agencies or agencies with like-minds for sample surveys that work for their organization.
* Be certain to formulate a way to have access to records that include the ethnicity and socio-economics of those served by the program, as these particulars are often asked in grants.
* Be certain to communicate program outcomes annually or more often to funders.
* Written communication with donors may include testimonials from participants and/or volunteers.
* Think beyond written communication and include donors in program-site visits.
* Photographs can be useful in telling the program story. Always use a photo release which is included in the Appendix, page 56.
* Revenue sources and expenditures need to be tracked and copies of invoices/checks need to be available for authentication of granted or donated monies spent.
* If a logic model has been utilized, use segments of its matrix for evaluating outcomes.

Because Christ Child Society programs vary greatly in size, impact and scope, no one evaluation fits all programs. However, for all programs, it is important to draw input from volunteers, partner agencies and participants in order to fully capture the data necessary for a full evaluation. Several ***Sample Evaluation forms*** (link to Sample Evaluations on Evaluation Home Page) are provided on this website.