Family Empowerment Implementation Manual

Updated 2019

Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Family
Empowerment
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Acknowledgment:

Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Overview

*There is synergy between the best that implementation science can offer
and the unique expertise that families bring to the table.*

— Parent Leadership Coordinator

Through family empowerment and leadership, new pathways are being paved for families and child welfare professionals to work in partnership to achieve positive outcomes. Child welfare agencies are turning to diverse programs and practices—family group decision-making, parent partner programs, and family consultation on policy development, among others—to engage families and increase family voice. While the evidence base continues to grow on what we know about such programs and practices, we also are learning more about how to implement them. By implementation, we mean the processes and activities involved in "putting into practice" programs and strategies and effectively managing change.

The Capacity Building Center for States (Center for States) developed the *Family Empowerment Implementation Manual* to support child welfare professionals and family leaders[1] in applying a structured, research-informed approach to planning, initiating, and sustaining family engagement and empowerment programs and strategies. The manual combines research and guidance on best practices in family empowerment with the evolving field of implementation science. The manual also reinforces and expands on concepts introduced in the Center for States' Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy (FELA) (see box below). While developed specifically for public child welfare agency leaders and family leaders who have completed FELA training, the manual may be useful for other audiences developing and implementing family empowerment programs and strategies."

This manual begins by introducing key concepts in family engagement and implementation science, then provides a more detailed look at change and implementation activities that guide effective implementation. Based on research and practice expertise, the suggested change and implementation activities draw from the Center for States' Change and Implementation in Practice series.

Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy

Developed by the Center for States and its Family Consultant Team, FELA includes the following components:

- **E-learning modules** for family leaders, child welfare agency leaders, and child welfare staff to build their understanding of:
  - Forming meaningful partnerships between agency leaders and family leaders
  - Using experience to impact sustainable change
  - Providing peer-to-peer family support
- **Curriculum modules** for in-person training on key family empowerment topics to build skills and promote their application at the agency/system level
- **Virtual training for trainers** to prepare family leader trainers and state agency trainers to deliver the curriculum at state and local levels
- An **implementation manual** to guide the implementation of effective family empowerment strategies and processes and provide ongoing support

Log on to FELA at https://learn.childwelfare.gov/ (registration required)

---

[1] Family leaders are adults in parenting roles, including parents and adoptive, resource, and kinship parents, who have experience in the child welfare system and who wish to use that experience to improve outcomes for children and families.

2. Family Engagement and Empowerment in Child Welfare

*After years of addiction to alcohol and drugs, I lost all six of my children, never regaining custody.
I was told on numerous occasions that even if I found them, they wouldn't remember me; those bonds were
broken. As I think of meeting my son for the first time after 8 long years, with tears in his eyes, he said to me,
"I could smell you all the time." No one can replace a bond between a child and his or her mother.
Let's work together in partnership to keep families together.*

— A mother with experience in the child welfare system

In this publication, the Center for States uses the following definitions of the interrelated concepts of "family engagement" and "family empowerment." These preliminary definitions will continue to evolve as family leaders and agency leaders initiate related strategies and continue dialogue nationwide.

▸ Family engagement: a family-centered and strengths-based approach to partnering with families in making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes.

▸ Family empowerment: the acts of engaging, involving, and lifting up the voice of families throughout all areas in child welfare. This is the process of encouraging families to take an active role in participating with a child welfare agency. Family members share their knowledge to improve outcomes for children and families and support the enhancement of agency operations.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the importance of family engagement and empowerment in child welfare, evidence-based and evidence-informed family engagement strategies and program examples, and the role of meaningful partnerships to advance family empowerment.

The Importance of Family Engagement and Empowerment in Child Welfare

Family engagement increasingly is recognized as a foundation of effective child welfare casework and an essential element in service delivery. A review of literature in child welfare and four related disciplines found that family engagement (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017):

▸ Enhances the fit between family needs and services

▸ Promotes or improves the likelihood of positive outcomes for children, youth, and families

▸ Improves families' abilities to cope with issues they are experiencing

▸ Enhances systems' capacity to support families, including improved services and resources

▸ Enhances the helping relationship, boosts staff morale, and improves workforce skills

At the case level, when families feel they are a part of a process, they are more motivated to make needed changes. This allows them to be "drivers" in the decision-making process rather than being told what to do. In addition, engagement can lead to an improved and shared understanding of family needs and the identification of services and supports to meet those needs (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016). Family buy-in and use of services, in turn, can help lead to positive outcomes for children and families, including timely family reunification (Berrick, Cohen, & Anthony, 2011).

Likewise, engaging families at the program, agency, or system level can build better dialogue with families, improve parents' abilities to advocate for their needs, promote buy-in for interventions (programs or strategies), and help make agencies more responsive and accountable to the families they serve (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014). For more information on the benefits of working with youth and families and strategies for engaging them, see "Strategies for Authentic Integration of Youth and Family Voice in Child Welfare."

As shown in exhibit 1, family involvement and engagement strategies take place at three levels: the case, peer, and system levels (National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care, 2010). While child welfare systems across the country have made substantial efforts and gains over the past decade to improve family engagement and involvement at the case level, momentum is just beginning at the peer and system levels. Attention to all three levels is necessary to achieve meaningful and sustainable systems change related to family empowerment.

Exhibit 1. Levels of Family Engagement and Involvement

CASE: OWN FAMILY
Family members are involved in their own case through family-based practices, such as family group decision-making and child-family teams.

SYSTEM: AGENCY PRACTICE
Families help design, build, and improve agency practices and systems through activities such as participating in advisory groups for programs, policies, or evaluations; training staff, and advocating for change in legislatures and other public forums.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

PEER: OTHER FAMILIES
Families support other families involved in the system through roles as parent navigators or mentors.

Source: National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care. (2010). Improving child welfare outcomes through systems of care demonstration initiative. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau.

Continuum of Family Engagement to Empowerment

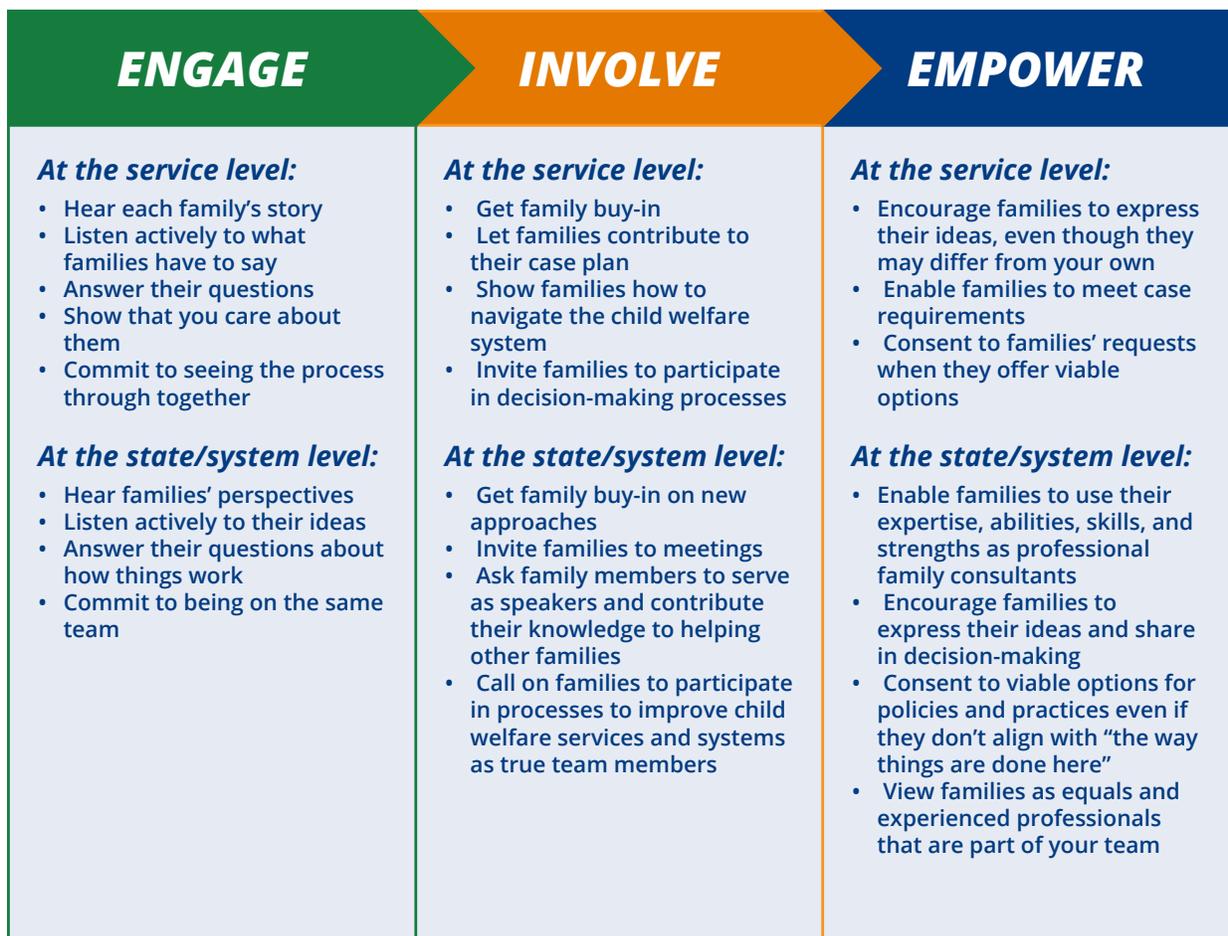*As National Family Consultants, we believe and have first-hand experience that when families are effectively engaged from the very beginning of their case, and are meaningfully involved in the child welfare process, then families will walk naturally into their own empowerment.*

— Family Empowerment Program Area Advisor

The Children's Bureau and the Center for States recognize that, to advance family engagement in a meaningful way at the national, state, and local levels, it is essential to cultivate family leadership and build capacity for family empowerment. As defined earlier, family empowerment encompasses family engagement and can be thought of as part of a continuum that begins with the basic engagement of families and listening to what they have to say, continues with family involvement in decision-making processes, and then expands into the active promotion of meaningful partnerships and power-sharing between agency staff and families to impact the broader system. Exhibit 2 presents agency activities that create an environment that fosters engagement, involvement, and empowerment at the service level (case level) and at the state or system level.

Exhibit 2. Continuum of Family Engagement to Empowerment

ENGAGE	INVOLVE	EMPOWER
At the service level: • Hear each family's story • Listen actively to what families have to say • Answer their questions • Show that you care about them • Commit to seeing the process through together	**At the service level:** • Get family buy-in • Let families contribute to their case plan • Show families how to navigate the child welfare system • Invite families to participate in decision-making processes	**At the service level:** • Encourage families to express their ideas, even though they may differ from your own • Enable families to meet case requirements • Consent to families' requests when they offer viable options
At the state/system level: • Hear families' perspectives • Listen actively to their ideas • Answer their questions about how things work • Commit to being on the same team	**At the state/system level:** • Get family buy-in on new approaches • Invite families to meetings • Ask family members to serve as speakers and contribute their knowledge to helping other families • Call on families to participate in processes to improve child welfare services and systems as true team members	**At the state/system level:** • Enable families to use their expertise, abilities, skills, and strengths as professional family consultants • Encourage families to express their ideas and share in decision-making • Consent to viable options for policies and practices even if they don't align with "the way things are done here" • View families as equals and experienced professionals that are part of your team

Family Engagement/Empowerment Strategies and Program Examples

Agencies should familiarize themselves with the array of interventions that advance family engagement and empowerment. These include formal programs and practice strategies that require comprehensive implementation efforts as well as less comprehensive approaches that build a family-friendly environment.

Programs and Practice Strategies With Evidence of Success

A wide range of interventions can foster family engagement across system, peer, and case levels. An inventory of family engagement activities (Child Welfare Information Gateway, n.d.) identified the following programs and strategies under "what works" in child welfare. Each of these programs and practice strategies has a family engagement component and was supported by an evaluative process:[2]

- Differential/alternative response: a structuring of child protective services that allows for more than one method of initial response to a report of child abuse and neglect, based on immediate safety concerns, risk levels, and other factors associated with the report.
- Motivational interviewing: a client-centered counseling method designed to enhance parents' motivation for behavior change by helping families explore and resolve issues.
- Engaging families in case planning: a collaborative process in which caseworkers involve family members on an ongoing basis in a range of case planning activities, from identifying family needs and strengths through assessing progress toward goals.
- Family group decision-making: an umbrella term for several similar approaches in which family members and their support networks are brought together to make decisions about how to safely care for their children and develop a plan for services. Specific models include family group conferencing, family team conferencing, and family unity meetings.
- Solution-based casework: an evidence-informed casework practice model that prioritizes working in partnership with families, focuses on pragmatic solutions to difficult situations, and notices and celebrates change.
- Parent partner programs: programs in which parents with experience in child welfare mentor and support parents who are new to the system and offer family voice in system activities.
- Intensive family preservation services: family-focused, community-based crisis intervention services designed to maintain children safely in their homes and prevent the unnecessary separation of families.
- Father involvement interventions: programs and activities that aim to increase fathers' active and positive engagement in their children's lives.

For more information, search the program or practice strategy name at https://www.childwelfare.gov and http://www.cebc4cw.org/home/.

Additional Approaches to Creating an Environment Open to Family Engagement and Empowerment

In addition to the above formal programs and practice strategies for family engagement, the approaches highlighted in exhibit 3 can help create an environment and a culture that promote family engagement and empowerment within an agency.

---

2 Family engagement often is part of a larger service delivery process, and currently there is not a large base of quantitative evidence on the isolated impact of family engagement activities from rigorous, controlled studies. Nevertheless, there are strong, positive indications for these programs and strategies from practice experiences (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017).

Exhibit 3. Approaches to Creating an Environment Open to Family Engagement

Family-Friendly Approach	Elements or Actions
Establish a family-focused culture.	▶ Build a shared understanding of family engagement and empowerment. ▶ Communicate and demonstrate leadership commitment to family engagement and empowerment. ▶ Model inclusion of family voice at all levels of the organization. ▶ Seek out and actively listen to new ideas regarding family engagement and empowerment. ▶ Encourage and reward staff for thinking creatively about engaging families.
Create a family-friendly space.	▶ Provide comfortable furniture and clean and neat surroundings with warm and vibrant colors. ▶ Post positive messages regarding the agency's commitment to families. ▶ Offer age-appropriate toys and activities for children. ▶ Display appropriate parenting and resource information in a variety of languages and in an easy-to-read format. ▶ Ensure privacy (within bounds of safety).
Put in place policies and procedures that promote family engagement.	▶ Establish clear roles for mothers and fathers to serve as policy advisors. ▶ Integrate input from family leaders into policies and procedures. ▶ Conduct periodic reviews to identify what is working to empower families and what needs to change. ▶ Offer training for staff on family engagement policies and procedures.
Communicate and build trusting relationships.	▶ Be honest in all interactions with families, even when delivering unpleasant news. ▶ Use respectful language and tone in all communication with families. ▶ Avoid authoritarian language, professional jargon, and posturing. ▶ Work on identifying implicit bias and addressing stereotypes. ▶ Show empathy for each family's situation. ▶ Develop a space for family leaders and staff to come together to share experiences.

Family-Friendly Approach	Elements or Actions
Hire and train staff to be family friendly.	▸ Examine agency culture and climate (as well as the fostering culture) to determine the perceptions of families involved in child welfare. ▸ Ensure staff understand what "family-friendly" means and why it is important. ▸ Incorporate training processes and materials to build staff understanding and skills. ▸ Integrate family friendliness as a theme in all trainings. ▸ Offer coaching to support transfer of learning from training to practice.
Encourage families to connect and support each other.	▸ Offer networking opportunities for parents and families within the agency. ▸ Make peer-to-peer support available by designing and implementing parent partner programs. ▸ Promote deliberate connections between parents and resource parents through activities such as ice-breaker meetings. ▸ Explore community resources where families who receive services can connect with each other (through faith-based organizations, recreational services, etc.).
Help support families' basic needs.	▸ Increase staff awareness of the challenges faced by families who experience poverty. ▸ Build "bridges" and collaborate with community partners and service providers. ▸ Help families connect with resources, including housing, transportation, childcare, health care, substance use meetings, and parenting classes.

For more information on building a culture to partner with families, visit the Becoming a Family-Focused System webpage.

The Role of Meaningful Partnerships to Advance and Sustain Family Empowerment
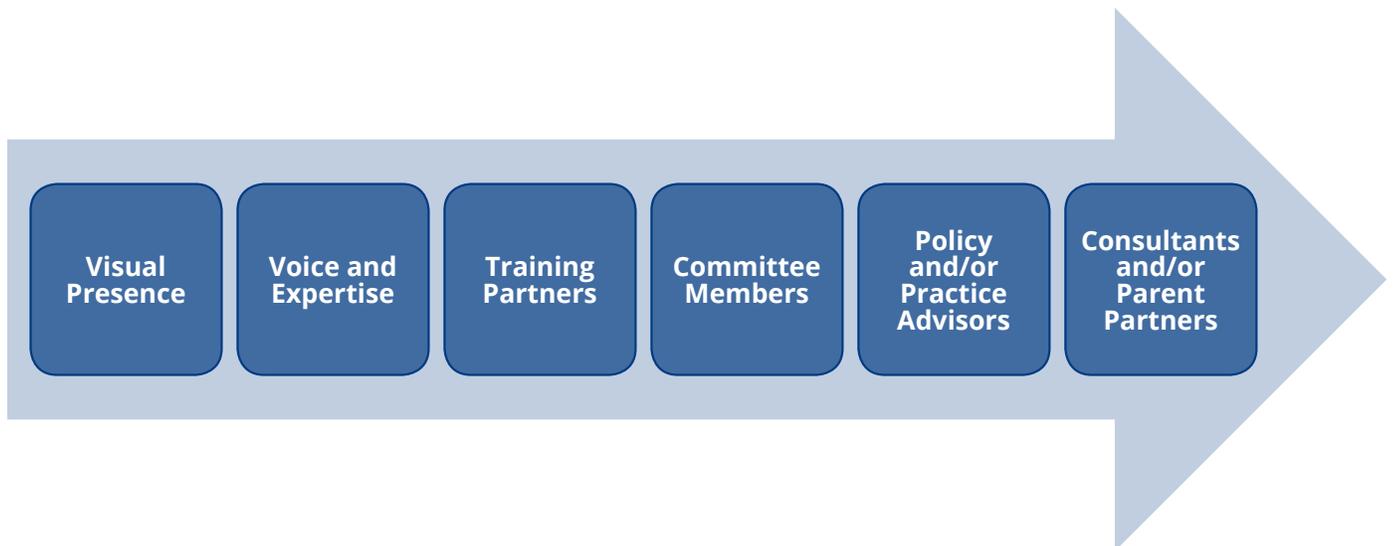
Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

— Henry Ford

Advancing family empowerment can best be achieved through meaningful partnerships between agency staff and family leaders. As noted earlier, family leaders are adults in parenting roles, including parents and adoptive, resource, and kinship parents, who have experience in the child welfare system and who wish to use that experience to improve outcomes for children and families.

These partnerships often represent a major shift from traditional roles and relationships between families and child welfare agencies. Agency staff must recognize and apply the insight and expertise that family members offer and provide a continuum of diverse opportunities for family leaders to contribute to child welfare agency activities (shown in exhibit 4). At one end of the continuum are parents who become a visible presence in the child welfare agency and those who are ready to share their stories, voice, and expertise. In the middle of the continuum are family leaders who serve as training partners, members of advisory boards and planning committees, and policy/practice advisors. At the far end of the spectrum are family leaders who provide peer-to-peer support to other parents and those who serve as family consultants for state or federal agencies. Family leaders must adopt new perspectives as they take on new roles and make a shift from being child welfare clients to accepting new responsibilities to work together with agency staff on behalf of other families (National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care, 2011).

Exhibit 4. Continuum of Roles for Family Leaders

Source: Capacity Building Center for States. (2016). Family Empowerment Leadership Academy handouts.

Both agency staff and family members may need to build their capacity for partnership. This can be achieved through training, coaching, and professional development activities. For training resources, see FELA's e-learning module on meaningful partnerships at https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/course/view.php?id=18. Agency staff and family members also may find useful the Center for State's "Strategies for Authentic Integration of Family and Youth Voice in Child Welfare," which presents tips for engaging families and youth at agency and system levels in meaningful ways.

For implementation efforts, meaningful partnerships require that agency staff and family leaders collaborate on all facets of program development and implementation—from identifying needs and underlying causes of problems through selecting appropriate solutions, preparing for and carrying out implementation, and assessing results.

3. Implementation Science and Change Management

FELA's proposed approach to implementation of family engagement and empowerment programs and strategies is rooted in implementation science and research-informed change and implementation processes. This chapter presents:

- A brief introduction to implementation science
- An overview of a change and implementation cycle and related topics
- Key dimensions of organizational capacity

These concepts will provide a foundation for understanding and adopting the implementation processes described in chapters 4 and 5.

Use of Evidence and Implementation Science to Achieve Outcomes

Over the past decade, two interrelated trends have emerged in child welfare and across human services fields to strengthen our abilities to achieve positive outcomes for children and families:

- **Emphasis on evidence.** The first trend is an increased emphasis on identifying evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices. That is, looking at "what works." While there are several definitions of "evidence-based," many organizations are turning to definitions that combine scientific research evidence with clinical experience and consistency with family and client values (Walsh, Rolls Reutz, & Williams, 2015).

- **Implementation science.** The second trend reflects the development of theories and research focused on how and why implementation of these evidence-based programs and practices succeed or fail (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Nilsen, 2015). "Implementation science" is the study of the methods that promote full and effective adoption of interventions and innovations, helping to bridge the gap between research and real-world practice.

Implementation Frameworks

In the fields of implementation science and continuous quality improvement (CQI), many frameworks present systematic processes for implementing change in organizations and systems. These include, for example:

- The Active Implementation Framework and related work developed by the National Implementation Research Network (Bertram, Blase, & Fixsen, 2015; Fixsen et al., 2005)
- The Development, Implementation, and Assessment Approach (Permanency Innovations Initiative [PII] Technical Assistance Project, 2016)
- The Evidence-Based System for Innovation Support (Wandersman, Chien, & Katz, 2012)
- The Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment Framework (Aarons, Hurlburt, & Horwitz, 2011)
- The Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Practice (Framework Workgroup, 2014)
- Getting to Outcomes (Barbee, Christensen, Antle, Wandersman, & Cahn, 2011)

These frameworks typically divide implementation into stages or phases and emphasize the critical importance of early assessment of needs, systematic planning, and feedback loops. Common phases begin with identifying needs/exploring problems and developing theories for how to address them, and then moving to identifying solutions, planning and implementing the solutions, and finally, monitoring and evaluating and learning from findings (Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, 2015a).

Overview of Change and Implementation

To help agencies increase their knowledge of implementation science and build capacity to implement new programs and practices, the Center for States developed the Change and Implementation in Practice series. The series addresses key topics commonly associated with implementation and CQI frameworks (including those described above).[3]
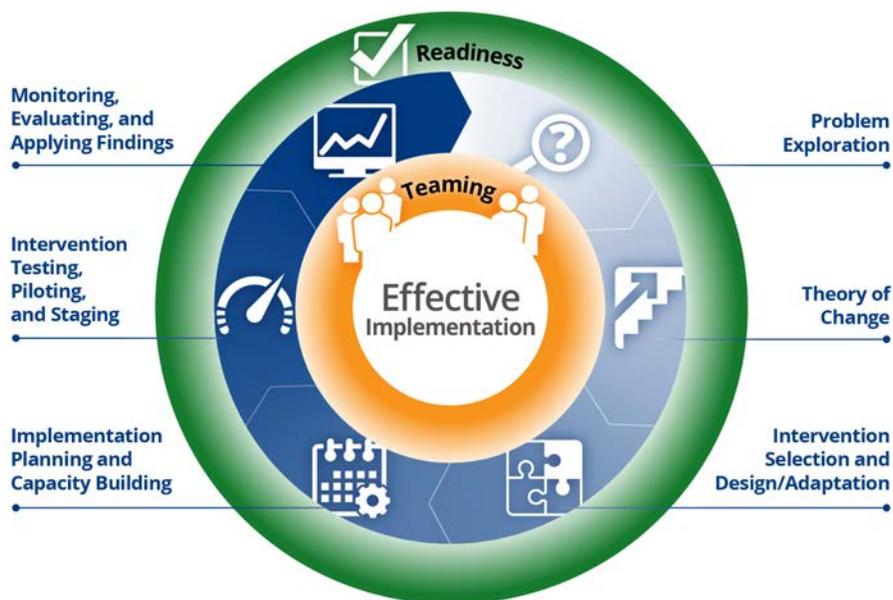
Exhibit 5 illustrates the key change and implementation topics (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018a). Each icon in the middle ring represents an important activity, including:

- ▶ Problem exploration
- ▶ Creation of a theory of change
- ▶ Intervention selection and design/adaptation
- ▶ Implementation planning and capacity building
- ▶ Intervention testing, piloting, and staging
- ▶ Monitoring, evaluating, and applying findings

Teaming and assessing readiness—shown in the inner ring and outer ring—are ongoing activities occurring throughout the process. Although implementation in a child welfare setting can be complicated and, at times, messy, these activities provide a structured approach to guide systematic progress. While the icons in the exhibit are represented sequentially, in practice there often will be overlap and movement back and forth among activities (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018a).

Chapters 4 and 5 of this manual will discuss these topics and how to integrate them with related activities when implementing family empowerment programs and strategies. For additional information on the topics, including supporting research and detailed guidance on applying them in child welfare agencies, see the Center for States' Change and Implementation in Practice webpage at https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/.

Exhibit 5. Key Change and Implementation Topics

---

[3] The Change and Implementation in Practice series and topics are compatible with the five phases of the Change and Implementation Process presented in Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative resources and earlier Center for States FELA materials.

Introduction to Five Dimensions of Organizational Capacity

An agency's organizational capacity generally influences its ability to achieve change and, specifically, to introduce and sustain new family empowerment strategies. Based on research, the Collaborative has organized different aspects of capacity into five general categories or dimensions: resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership (Capacity Building Center for States, 2017; Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, 2015b). Each dimension is described below, along with its connection to family empowerment activities.

Resources are the concrete materials and assets that support new programs and initiatives. To introduce and sustain new programs and strategies will require an assessment of needed staff, funding, program materials, data systems, and other resources. Resource considerations include compensation of family leaders for their time and expenses spent on attending meetings, facilitating trainings, and providing support to agency staff and/or other families.

Infrastructure is reflected in the agency's organizational structure, protocols, and processes. The sustainable success of a family empowerment initiative extends beyond the individuals who initiate it and requires a strong, underlying foundation of supportive organizational structures, policies, procedures, training, and systems. These may include: a steering committee with strong family and agency leadership; dedicated workgroups to manage the planning and implementation of specific family empowerment activities; agency policies that support family engagement; guidelines that direct specific practices, such as family group decision-making or peer mentoring; and CQI systems.

Knowledge and skills are developed to achieve needed expertise and competencies. Both agency staff and family members will need to build their knowledge and skills to achieve meaningful partnerships and to implement and participate in family empowerment programs. Training cofacilitated by family leaders and agency trainers can help model and reinforce partnership concepts. FELA e-learning modules and curriculum (https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/course/view.php?id=18) are resources to build competencies.

Culture and climate are shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that influence how people in an organization behave. While often used interchangeably, the terms are different. Culture refers to the norms, expectations, and priorities in a work environment—this is the collective view of "the way work is done." Indicators of culture include policies, priorities, mission and vision, and practice model (Glisson, 2015). Climate represents the perceptions of the environment that impact individuals' well-being and functioning—this is the view of "how it feels" to work at the agency (Glisson, 2015). Examples of organizational climate include staff perceptions, beliefs, and prevailing attitudes. Both culture and climate will affect how staff and families accept and support new programs and approaches. A culture and climate that support family empowerment may reflect a shared vision of meaningful partnership between the agency and families; leadership commitment and caseworker attitudes that embrace true family engagement as an essential strategy; family member beliefs that agency staff value their opinions and that their opinions can make a difference; and agency practices that routinely incorporate family voice in program and policy development. (For more information on culture and climate and how it can support family engagement, see the Becoming a Family-Focused System series webpage at https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/family-focused-system/.)

Engagement and partnership refer to the essential relationships and connections that support change. Meaningful partnerships between family leaders and agency staff lie at the core of successful family empowerment initiatives. These partnerships need to be encouraged and nurtured over time to enable shared leadership.

As discussed further in the sections that follow, agency and family leaders should consider each of these dimensions of capacity as they work together to initiate and sustain new family empowerment programs and strategies.

For more information on:

▸ Understanding the dimensions of organizational capacity, see *A Guide to Five Dimensions of Organizational Capacity: Support for Realizing Your Agency's Potential*

▸ Assessing organizational capacity as it relates to readiness for change and implementation, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness" brief and "Change and Implementation Readiness Assessment Tool"

▸ Building capacity to prepare for implementation, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Implementation Planning and Capacity Building" brief

4. Setting the Course for Implementation

In Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, Alice innocently asks the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?" The Cat replies, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."[4]

Achieving effective family empowerment and leadership must begin with determining where you want to get to and then deciding the best path to get there based on where you are now. To ensure that new family empowerment programs and strategies address underlying problems in the best ways, the change and implementation process begins with:

- Conducting problem exploration and exploring the root cause of the problem or need
- Forming teams
- Developing a theory of change

These topics are described below, along with key milestones and examples of their application to family empowerment and leadership. Sample questions to consider are presented within the text and as worksheets in the appendix.

Problem Exploration

Increasing family empowerment and leadership can be a complicated effort. Agencies can begin by sorting through some of that complexity and clarifying needs to be addressed, potential opportunities, and desired outcomes.

Overview

This initial step is intended to clarify and define your agency's need for family empowerment and leadership. Through problem exploration, teams use data to explore their needs or problems in depth, identify who is most affected, and understand the underlying causes (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018b).

Application

While agency and family leaders may be aware that family voice is missing from the child welfare agency's activities, partners will **dig deeper into the needs and opportunities** for family engagement and empowerment, document the evidence, and explore the underlying causes and potential barriers to addressing them. A variety of data sources may help define your agency's needs, such as:

- Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) findings and Program Improvement Plans
- Case reviews and other CQI activities conducted by the state or county
- Surveys of families about their experiences receiving child welfare services and the quality of those services
- Focus groups that explore existing levels of family engagement and empowerment, opportunities, challenges, and potential barriers
- Values surveys or inventories that explore staff perceptions of families
- Attendance of family members at case planning activities (for example, family team meetings, permanency and review hearings, and case reviews)
- Attendance of family members at agency planning activities and workgroups

---

4 Carroll, L. (1865). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: MacMillan Publishing Co.

Look at needs from different perspectives. Ask yourself "What are parents' needs for empowerment and leadership?" and "What are the agency's needs for family engagement, involvement, and empowerment? How are those needs being met? Where are there potential opportunities?" Include input from various stakeholders, including family leaders, parents, frontline caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and agency administrators.

As part of problem exploration, teams will generate a list of possible root causes that contribute to the identified problems or challenges (see "Teaming" below for more information on forming teams). One approach to doing this is referred to as the "5-Whys Method."[5] Simply ask "Why?" five times to explore deeper the possible causes of a problem. Data and evidence should support responses. Once your team has looked at the data in your own agency, investigate what available research says about similar issues elsewhere and their causes and consequences. For more information on digging deeper into problems and analyzing root causes, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Problem Exploration" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

Family Engagement Scenario: Sample 5-Whys Approach

Problem/need: Agency policies and procedures do not reflect family voice.

- ▸ Why? Because the agency has not reached out to obtain family input
- ▸ Why? Because the agency does not have established methods for conversations with families about their experiences or for families to "sit at the table" during planning and decision-making
- ▸ Why? Because the agency does not have a pool of parent leaders or methods to help parents build capacity to serve as policy advisors
- ▸ Why? Because obtaining family input seems different from the "ways things are done" and is potentially risky
- ▸ Why? Because agency administrators and staff do not value the expertise of family members and do not realize the insights that families can offer

During problem exploration, teams also will begin to think about the expected results of implementing a family empowerment program or strategy to meet identified needs. These results or changes may relate to shifts in the child welfare agency culture and climate, new processes and practices, and/or changes in service delivery, as well as longer term outcomes for children, youth, and families, such as improvements in safety, permanency, and well-being.

Underlying challenges and opportunities for family empowerment efforts are often intertwined with issues related to agency culture and climate. As such, culture and climate may be particular areas for agency and family leaders to explore during problem exploration. This may involve collecting information on prevailing norms and values (the written and unwritten expectations for how people behave) and on worker and family buy-in to forge partnerships. (For more information see the Becoming a Family-Friendly System webpage.)

---

5 For more information on root cause analysis, see http://www.lifetime-reliability.com/tutorials/lean-management- methods/How_to_Use_the_5-Whys_ for_Root_Cause_Analysis.pdf.

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to problem exploration. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

Questions Related to Data and Needs:

▸ What information does your agency know about family engagement and empowerment?

▸ What information or data suggest there is a problem, need, or opportunity for change? (For example, CFSR results, survey data, focus group findings)

▸ What is the scope of the problem, need, or opportunity?

▸ What do data suggest are causes of the problem/need for change or origin of the opportunity? What are some underlying or root causes of existing problems?

▸ What "story" do the data tell? How can the data be presented in ways that family members and agency staff find meaningful?

▸ What will the agency and families achieve by addressing the identified need(s) or opportunity?

▸ What will be different from today? What is the potential impact of changes in family empowerment?

▸ How are the identified needs related to the organizational culture and climate? To the child welfare system/structure? To existing policies? To practices?

▸ What facilitators and barriers to making changes exist?

▸ Have there been previous attempts to address the need for family empowerment? What were the results of previous programs?

▸ What additional sources of data should the agency and family leaders explore?

Family Engagement Scenario: Initial Exploration of Needs

In the early stages of exploring family engagement strengths and needs, a state child welfare agency identifies several issues to address:

▸ The state's case review process revealed that the agency was not involving parents in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

▸ The states' most recent CFSR results showed that the item "State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders" was an area needing improvement. This suggests potential low family involvement in agency decision-making.

▸ A survey of child welfare administrators found that the agency rarely consulted family members in program and policy development.

▸ The agency's initial attempts to bring families and staff together in training efforts did not succeed.

The state decides to explore the underlying issues further. The agency conducts focus groups to find out why families were not consulted in case, program, and policy development and why initial training efforts were unsuccessful. Consultants are brought in to examine agency culture and climate around family engagement and how administrators and staff value family voice. The findings indicate that staff do not respect family opinions, that the objectives of the training efforts are not clearly defined for staff and families, and that existing agency policies do not specify expectations for family consultation in program and policy development.

The implementation team assessed the findings and organized meetings with families, staff, and administrators to gather input on the findings and generate discussions about root causes. The team recognized that some problems might be quick fixes while others were more complex and might need additional analysis and deeper planning.

Key Milestones

- ▶ The agency's problem or need has been clearly defined and documented.
- ▶ There are sufficient data and information to understand the root cause(s) and underlying nature of the problem.
- ▶ Findings have been discussed with stakeholders.

Teaming

Having effective teams in place is critical to successfully creating and sustaining change in child welfare systems. Implementation science literature emphasizes the importance of working together as a team (see Children's Bureau, 2014; Maciolek, Arena, Fisher, & Helfgott, 2014; Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012; PII, 2016; Walsh, Rolls Reutz, & Williams, 2015).

Overview

Having a team (sometimes referred to as an implementation team) or multiple teams in place is vital to helping guide the change and implementation process. The initial team will complete the early steps in the process. The team can then be adapted, as needed, for later steps in the change and implementation process.

Application

To form the implementation team, agency leaders and family leaders should consider individuals with a passion for promoting family empowerment and leadership, those skilled in needs assessment and analysis, and good collaborators. In addition, consider bringing in stakeholders from different levels of the agency (caseworkers, supervisors, middle managers, data managers, agency leadership), as well as family members with diverse experiences and community leaders. Keep the team small enough to be manageable, yet large enough to represent different perspectives.

When identifying meeting plans, address potential challenges for family member participation, such as timing, transportation, childcare, and other logistical issues.

An important part of team formation is **creating the team charter**, a formal document created by the initial team early in the change and implementation process that provides the foundation for the implementation team's work (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018c). It can also be useful for orienting new team members as part of a larger onboarding process or when additional teams are formed. A team charter should include the following elements:

- ▶ Mission of the initiative
- ▶ Goals and objectives for the work of team
- ▶ Scope, boundaries, and timeframe for completing the work
- ▶ Expected deliverables
- ▶ Decision-making authority and policy
- ▶ Role of agency leadership on the team
- ▶ Communication strategies and frequency, both within the team and among other related teams
- ▶ Roles and responsibilities

For more information on teaming, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Teaming" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to teaming. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

▸ What are the purpose and expectations for the team?

▸ What roles and expertise are required for an effective team? Who has the right experience and skills for the team?

▸ Does the team represent diverse perspectives? Does the team represent sufficient numbers of parents?

▸ Should there be a single team or several specialized teams?

▸ What specific tasks need to be performed and who will accomplish them? How will expectations be documented?

▸ How will the team communicate? Whose responsibility is it to ensure that information is communicated to the right people?

▸ How will the team make decisions? How will the team communicate results?

Key Milestones

▸ A team has been established to guide the change process.

▸ Team roles, protocols, timeline, and deliverables have been clarified in a team charter.

▸ Team communication and decision-making protocols have been established.

Developing a Theory of Change

During this part of the change management process, the identified team builds from its research on the identified problems and needs and starts thinking through how solutions might address the underlying causes of the problems and needs and improve outcomes.

Overview

A theory of change serves as a roadmap to illustrate the path from a problem's root cause(s) to a long-term outcome in which the problem has been addressed (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018d). Through a theory of change, agency and family leaders can highlight a series of needed changes in conditions, knowledge, and behaviors and how they should unfold.

Application

To develop your team's theory of change, follow these general steps:

▸ Indicate the problem and root cause to be addressed. Along with the root cause, note the target population that is most affected by the problem.

▸ Identify a long-term outcome based on where agency and family leaders would like to be.

▸ Develop the pathway of change. From the intended achievement or long-term outcome (e.g., improvements in family reunification and permanency), work your way back through:

▪ Necessary preconditions (e.g., family engagement is present in services)

▪ Changes, conditions, attitudes, or behaviors that lead to the next "link" (e.g., parents with child welfare experience are matched with parents new to child welfare)

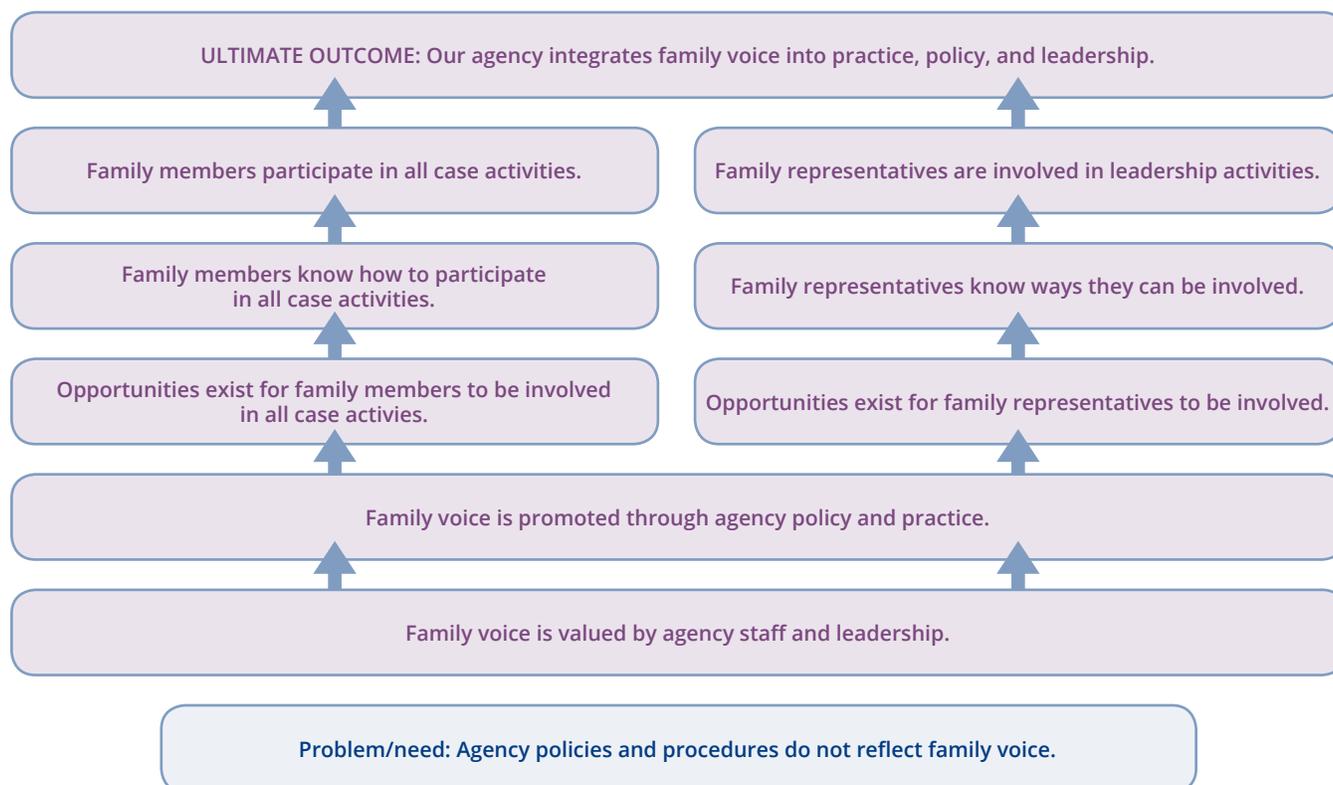▸ Document assumptions (e.g., peer outreach and support can help engage families in services that meet their needs).

For more detailed instructions, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Theory of Change" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.

The scenario box and exhibit below present a sample theory of change. This example describes a basic approach to a theory of change. Each team should customize its theory of change to match its particular context and goals.

Family Engagement Scenario: Sample Theory of Change

Shown in exhibit 6, this team's long-term outcome is to achieve better outcomes by integrating family voice into practice, policy, and leadership within its agency. To achieve the ultimate outcome, two preconditions are foundational. First, agency staff and leadership must value family voice. Second, agency policy and practice must promote family voice. In the next level of preconditions, the pathways split into practice and system tracks. At the practice level, opportunities must exist for family members to be involved in all case activities in a meaningful way. After this happens, family members must know how to participate in all case activities. If they know how to participate, they can achieve the next precondition, which is to participate in all case activities. Jumping now to the systems path and starting at the bottom, family representatives must have opportunities to be involved at a system level. Moving up the pathway, family representatives must know the ways they can be involved. In the next precondition, family representatives are involved in leadership activities to increase family voice. Once this happens, then the agency can achieve its ultimate outcome of integrating family voice in the agency practice, policy, and leadership.

Exhibit 6. Sample Theory of Change

ULTIMATE OUTCOME: Our agency integrates family voice into practice, policy, and leadership.

Family members participate in all case activities.

Family representatives are involved in leadership activities.

Family members know how to participate in all case activities.

Family representatives know ways they can be involved.

Opportunities exist for family members to be involved in all case activies.

Opportunities exist for family representatives to be involved.

Family voice is promoted through agency policy and practice.

Family voice is valued by agency staff and leadership.

Problem/need: Agency policies and procedures do not reflect family voice.

Another approach to creating a theory of change is to use a "so that" chain (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004). For example, a few "links" in the chain might include the following:

Strategy: Parents entering child welfare are matched with a peer parent partner who can offer emotional support and help them understand how the system works

So that

Parents new to the system feel supported and more quickly overcome fears or anger

So that

Parents view the child welfare system as a resource and support to them.

For more information on "so that" chains, see http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change.

Part of the power of a theory of change approach is the collaborative process by which it is created. It is important to bring together a group of diverse stakeholders to brainstorm the pathway to stronger family empowerment and leadership. Involving multiple family representatives in the development of the theory of change is crucial.

A theory of change can help guide later decision-making. During a subsequent phase of the change and implementation process, the team selects programs, strategies, or other interventions to achieve the preconditions in the theory of change. In the "so that" scenario, for example, a parent partner program that provides peer-to-peer support and mentoring from parents with experience in child welfare may help parents entering the child welfare system learn how to participate in case activities. Parent partners also may serve as family representatives on the agency's leadership team so that their voice is represented at all agency levels.

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to developing a theory of change. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

▸ What final outcomes or change do you want to achieve?

▸ Which root causes will best help you address the identified need or outcome?

▸ What conditions, changes, or behaviors need to be in place or barriers overcome to reach your outcome?

▸ What activities or strategies will lead to your outcomes?

▸ What assumptions explain how the conditions or changes will lead to outcomes?

▸ What short- or intermediate-term outcomes will contribute to the final outcomes?

▸ How can you track and measure progress toward outcomes?

Key Milestone

▸ Agency and family leaders have a specific theory of change that shows the pathway toward improvement.

5. Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Family Empowerment Programs and Initiatives

The steps for implementing a program may seem straightforward: identify a need, hire staff and provide the service or product to a target population. However, implementing programs that work requires careful advanced planning, the involvement of multiple stakeholders, and a process that ensures accountability.

— Durlak, 2013, p.1

Many agencies with the best of intentions for family engagement and empowerment have seen promising interventions fail. Successful implementation requires a systematic approach to change management that integrates careful planning and ongoing assessment. This chapter describes the following implementation activities:

- Selecting, adapting, and designing solutions
- Assessing readiness
- Implementation planning and capacity building
- Testing, piloting, and staging
- Monitoring, evaluating, and applying findings

For each topic area, this manual presents related steps, examples of their application to family empowerment and engagement, and key milestones. Sample questions to consider are presented within the text and as worksheets in the appendix.

Selecting, Adapting, and Designing Solutions

At this stage, your team's efforts will focus on finding, adapting, and/or designing the best solution, program, or strategy (also referred to as an intervention) to address identified needs or opportunities.

Overview

Teams should research existing family engagement and empowerment practices and programs, identify possible solutions that reflect the theory of change, assess the fit and feasibility of possible options, and select the best solution. Looking at available program materials, teams also explore whether the interventions under consideration are well defined and whether there is sufficient information available to apply them consistently in a new setting.

Choosing an appropriate solution requires critical thinking about whether there is an existing solution that is a good fit (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018e). Building from their research, agency and family leaders move forward on one of these paths:

- Selecting a well-defined existing program or strategy to implement
- Adapting an existing program or strategy (or selected components) to meet agency and family needs and improve implementation
- Designing a new program or strategy to meet needs

Application

Begin intervention selection by thinking more about the family empowerment and leadership challenges in your agency and revisiting the team's theory of change. Then, follow these steps to research solutions:

- ▸ **Conduct a review** of existing family empowerment and engagement practices and programs, particularly ones with a strong grounding in research and practice. See examples of programs and strategies in chapter 2 of this manual. Consult respected information sources, such as:

  - California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare: http://www.cebc4cw.org
  - Child Welfare Information Gateway's Family Engagement Inventory: https://www.childwelfare.gov/fei/
  - Center for States – FELA webpage: https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/family-empowerment-leadership-academy

- ▸ **Reach out** through peer networks to identify how other states and jurisdictions have addressed similar needs and their results. Contact program developers or experts for their insights.

- ▸ **Review existing literature** (journal articles, evaluation reports) to learn about findings related to the effectiveness of possible programs and practices, particularly for addressing your population's needs, and potential challenges associated with each option.

- ▸ **Consider the fit** of potential interventions with your agency and families served. Considerations may include agency and family values and norms, existing structures, ongoing initiatives, and other contextual issues. Think about the obstacles your agency and family leaders might have to overcome for implementation (for example, changes in current policies or traditional ways of working).

- ▸ **Compare different programs or strategies** in terms of evidence of effectiveness, alignment with your theory of change, fit within your agency, practicality given available resources, and readiness.

The PII "Innovation Assessment and Section Tool" can help organize your analysis; available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol2_exploration.pdf.

Based on the information collected, the input of families and other stakeholders, and group discussions, your team will **focus on the best intervention to meet your needs** or opportunities. If there are no existing interventions that appear to be a good fit as is, teams may consider adapting the intervention or selected parts to better fit with the population and setting. Teams should take care in adapting an evidence-supported intervention to maintain the integrity of its core components to the extent possible. (Core components are the essential building blocks believed to lead to positive outcomes.) In some cases, if a team cannot identify an existing intervention that will meet its needs and circumstances (with or without adaptation), it may decide to design a new one. Whether your team decides to implement an existing program/strategy, adapt it, or design a new one, these decisions should reflect broad-based stakeholder involvement. (For more information on making these decisions, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide).

Teams may need to further define and operationalize the program or strategy, particularly if an existing intervention that is not well defined has been selected, they decided to adapt or add core components, or they designed a new intervention. This work involves describing the intervention's core components, key activities, and expected behaviors for everyday practice.

Family Engagement Scenario: Identifying and Selecting Possible Solutions

A county agency recognizes that it is falling short in involving families in case planning, which is negatively affecting outcomes related to family reunification and permanency. The team—which includes family leaders, agency leaders, and research staff—identifies several practice strategies with research evidence (promising or stronger) to address the problem. These include family group decision-making, motivational interviewing, and solution-based casework. The team also explores program strategies, such as differential response and parent partner programs, which could strengthen efforts at the case level.

Team members conduct research on each strategy. Using information from both the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare and Child Welfare Information Gateway, they explore the evidence base, core components, requirements, and challenges of each strategy. They ask questions of others through networking activities, and they bring in families and staff at various levels of the agency to assess which strategy might be of most value to stakeholders. Their research concludes with consensus on selecting a combination of solution-based casework and parent partner programs as the most feasible solutions.

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to intervention selection and adaptation/design. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

Questions Related to Assessing Possible Solutions:

▸ What different solutions (new programs, initiatives, and practice changes) might improve or enhance family engagement and empowerment in your agency?

▸ Does your agency need solutions at the case, peer, and/or system levels?

▸ What does available research or published literature say about potential programs or practices and their outcomes? What do other child welfare agency leaders and family leaders say?

▸ What evidence indicates that each program or strategy will address your agency's specific needs or opportunities?

▸ Do the programs or strategies align with the team's theory of change?

▸ Do the programs or strategies reflect family-centered and strengths-based values? Other agency values? Family values?

▸ How do the programs or strategies fit with the agency's culture and climate and the current way of doing things?

▸ What might be some potential challenges to implementation of each possible solution? (For example, costs, policy mandates, staffing resources, prevailing attitudes)

▸ What do stakeholders say about the various options?

▸ Which solution seems most feasible?

Questions Related to Using/Adapting an Existing Solution or Designing a New Solution:

▸ Will your team use or adapt an existing program/strategy model or design a new one? Why?

▸ What are the objectives of the selected program or strategy? What are the core components?

- ▶ What aspects of the program or strategy will need to change to adapt to your environment or audience (e.g., to be culturally responsive)? What aspects should remain the same?
- ▶ Are the core components and key activities well defined? Are the expected behaviors clear? Can they be easily taught and put into place?
- ▶ What capacity does the agency need to support the program or strategy? (Think about changes in resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership.)
- ▶ Are there experts available who can provide guidance on this program/strategy?
- ▶ How will your team know if the program or strategy is working? How will your team measure success?

Key Milestones

- ▶ The team has identified possible intervention options and assessed their fit and feasibility (or the team has good reasons for considering only one program or strategy).
- ▶ Stakeholders, including family and agency leaders, have selected and vetted a program or strategy.
- ▶ The selected program or strategy will address the identified root cause(s) of the problem.
- ▶ The team has clearly defined the intervention's core components, related activities, and expected behaviors.

Readiness

For family empowerment programs and strategies to succeed, the agency must be ready. That is, agency and family leaders and staff at all levels must be both willing and able to implement and sustain the new program, practice, or other intervention (Dymnicki, Wandersman, Osher, Grigorescu, & Huang, 2014).

Overview

Assessing readiness involves looking at motivation and different aspects of capacity (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018f; Scaccia et al., 2015). Considerations include:

- ▶ **Motivation** – Do agency and family leaders and staff throughout the agency believe that change is needed? Does the new program or strategy appear compatible with existing values and needs? Does it appear doable? Does it seem better than what is currently being done?
- ▶ **Capacity** – Are there adequate resources and infrastructure to support the program or strategy? Are there appropriate knowledge and skills or processes to develop them? Are there established partnerships between agency staff and families? Do the culture and climate—specifically, the prevailing norms, attitudes, and behaviors—support the program or strategy?

Readiness fluctuates and may be assessed at various times over the course of a change and implementation process.

Application

Assess your agency's readiness for meaningful family engagement and empowerment. Consider both motivation and capacity. Take a close look at the culture and climate and identify the assumptions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that may stand in the way of advancing family empowerment. Explore how leadership's vision and commitment to the new intervention are communicated, modeled, and reinforced.

Once your team has identified strengths and areas for development, begin thinking about strategies to address them. (For more information and assessment tools, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness" brief and "Becoming a Family-Focused System: Assessing Culture and Climate," as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.).

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to readiness. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

▸ Is the agency prepared to pursue a change effort to improve family empowerment?

▸ Is the agency prepared to put in place the identified family empowerment program or strategy?

▸ Have key stakeholder groups been involved in planning, including family leaders, agency leaders, and staff from multiple levels of the agency?

▸ Is there a shared commitment to change?

▸ Does the program fit with agency priorities? With leadership support? With family member concerns? With staff beliefs?

▸ Does the agency have the resources (funding, staff, and office space) available to implement the identified program or practice?

▸ Does the agency have the necessary infrastructure and implementation supports (e.g., recruitment, training, coaching) in place to support implementation?

▸ What policies or procedures may the agency need to develop or revise to support implementation?

▸ What new knowledge and skills will staff and family leaders need to successfully implement the program or practice?

▸ What may stand in the way of the program or strategy's success?

Key Milestones

▸ The team has completed an assessment of organizational readiness for implementation.

Implementation Planning and Capacity Building

Planning, capacity building, and thoughtful implementation are as important to achieving desired outcomes as the selection of the right program or strategy (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

Overview

To set the groundwork for a new family empowerment program or strategy, teams develop an implementation plan. An implementation plan is a document that describes key steps and activities needed to prepare and put a program in place (Capacity Building Center for States, 2019a). The plan identifies roles, responsibilities, and timeframes and how activities will be coordinated.

To support implementation, teams will begin to build capacity and strengthen motivation to address the needs identified in the readiness assessment. Capacity building may occur in one or more of the five dimensions discussed in chapter 3: resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership.

Application

Develop an implementation plan that outlines activities for before and during implementation. Note tasks related to completing the intervention's adaptation or design, if needed, and developing or strengthening implementation supports. These supports may include recruitment and selection processes, training and coaching, assessment protocols, policy changes, data collection systems, and communication processes. In addition, identify activities and approaches for rolling out the intervention, using data for monitoring and evaluation, and communicating results.

Think about how your team will **build capacity** related to resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership. Consider both the capacity of the agency and the capacity of the family members to work in partnership toward family empowerment. The first may require, for example, changes to agency policies and practices, and the second may require outreach to and education of family members. Bring in technical support, as needed, for example, from the Center for States.

Focus on the results of your readiness assessment, identified capacity needs, and strategies to overcome barriers to begin capacity building. This may include, for example:

▶ Sharing the selected program or strategy's vision, objectives, and connections to improved child and family outcomes with a broad base of stakeholders

▶ Identifying "champions" and conducting outreach to support buy-in

▶ Creating an organizational structure for the program

▶ Identifying funding resources

▶ Establishing oversight processes

▶ Reviewing and revising policies and guidelines

▶ Defining roles and responsibilities

▶ Training staff and family leaders and implementing ongoing coaching structures

(For more information on developing an implementation plan and building capacity, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Implementation and Capacity Building" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.)

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to implementation planning and capacity building. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

▶ What tasks are required to prepare for and to implement the selected program or strategy? Who will be responsible? When will these tasks occur, and when will they be completed?

▶ What implementation supports need to be developed?

▶ What capacities does the agency need to develop?

▶ How will the agency improve the identified capacities? How will agency leaders and family leaders work together to build capacity?

▶ How can agency leaders and family leaders improve capacity to deal with adaptive challenges (ones that require new ways of thinking and working)?

▶ How will agency leaders and family leaders share knowledge on family empowerment and leadership? What types of learning or training events are needed?

▶ What systems does the agency have in place for coaching and supervision?

▶ What resources does the agency need to build capacity? What existing resources are available?

- How can new partnerships support capacity building?
- How will your team show progress in building capacity?

Key Milestones

- The team has created an implementation plan with tasks and timelines.
- The team has developed capacity to support implementation of the program/strategy (or developed plans and strategies for capacity building).

Family Engagement Scenario: Assess Readiness, Build Capacity, and Pilot Implementation

After agreeing to implement a peer-to-peer support program, an implementation team turned to readiness assessment, implementation planning, and capacity building. The team administered the Center for States' "Parent Partner Program Readiness Assessment Tool"[6] among administrators, staff, and family leaders to determine readiness, and then held meetings to discuss the findings. The tool looked at various aspects of readiness, including staff willingness and ability to embrace and support parent leaders in working with parents new to the child welfare system. Findings suggested capacity building needs related to resources, knowledge and skills, and culture and climate.

The team established a plan and timeline for different aspects of the implementation. Workgroups were formed to help with each aspect: preparing physical facilities, training staff about the program, and selecting and training parent leaders to provide peer-to-peer support.

The administration made sure that the necessary financial resources were available. The physical facilities workgroup created a designated workspace for the delivery of peer-to-peer services. The training workgroup researched similar programs in other states, reviewed the feedback gathered from stakeholders during the assessment phase, and developed training materials and curriculum for agency staff and parent leaders.

When the initial components were in place, the final touches were made to the physical space that the program would use—phone lines and computers were installed, a meeting space that provided comfort and confidentiality was created, and family-friendly resource materials were displayed. A select group of parent leaders participated in a series of trainings to provide peer-to-peer support. Staff received training about the program and its benefits and were provided an opportunity to meet the parent leaders and get to know them better. The agency rolled out the program on a limited trial basis in one county with the select group of parent leaders.

During this phase, the agency collected data on the number of parents who received peer-to-peer support and surveyed parents and staff about the program's usefulness. The parent leaders were asked for their impressions about their work, both what worked and what could use improvement. After the agency collected this information for 6 months, the original teams and administration assessed it, and a determination was made to continue and expand the peer-to-peer program with some minor changes.

---

6 For more information on parent partner programs and a related assessment tool, see the *Parent Partner Navigator: Designing and Implementing Parent Partner Programs in Child Welfare*.

Testing, Piloting, and Staging

Before launching a new family empowerment program or strategy on a large scale, it often helps to test components and processes, pilot implementation on a small scale, and/or introduce the intervention gradually (Capacity Building Center for States, 2019b).

Overview

This stage focuses on:

▸ Usability testing – quickly trying out selected processes and tools with small groups to assess and refine as needed

▸ Pilot testing – a trial run of the full program or strategy's implementation on a small scale (e.g., in one agency division or a single county)

▸ Staging – gradually rolling out the program or strategy in different areas

Such approaches enable your team to identify and work out potential problems before going "full steam ahead."

Application

If your team will be using new or adapted tools, forms, or processes as part of the family empowerment program or strategy, it may be helpful to conduct usability testing among a small group. For example, asking staff or family members to complete a new form. During such tests, your team can gain insight into the experience of staff or family members with the form, tool, or process and then make adjustments, as needed.

Next, your team may consider pilot testing implementation of the whole intervention, as outlined in your implementation plan, in a selected area, or among a selected population. This involves the following steps:

▸ Developing a plan for piloting, including the purpose, scope, key activities, and timeframes

▸ Recruiting willing sites or program areas to participate in the pilot

▸ Piloting the program or strategy while collecting data to determine what is working and what is not working

▸ Assessing the results with stakeholders and considering whether to move forward and, if so, what changes to make before doing so

Learning from the pilot test, consider whether your team is ready to scale up and expand. Think about how best to move into new areas, while considering readiness and capacity needs. (For more information on testing, piloting, and staging, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Intervention Testing, Piloting, and Staging" brief, as well as the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.)

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to intervention testing, piloting, and staging. (See the appendix for a complete list of questions organized by topic.)

Questions Related to Usability Testing:

▸ What processes or tools will benefit from usability testing?

▸ Was the process or tool implemented as expected? Did staff, family members, or other users have any notable difficulties in using the tool or completing the process?

▸ Do data and feedback suggest that the process or tool should be adjusted?

▸ Is further testing needed?

Questions Related to Piloting:

- What is the purpose of the pilot?
- What factors should the team consider in selection of the pilot site(s) and schedule?
- What sites have the capacity for successful implementation?
- Did implementation go as planned?
- What feedback has the team received about the program or strategy?
- What effect did the new program or process have on desired short-term outcomes?
- What can the team do to prepare for possible expansion? What changes must be made?

Questions Related to Staging:

- What are the proposed approach and timeframe for rolling out and scaling up the program or strategy?
- How will additional sites/populations be prepared?
- How will readiness be addressed and capacity be developed?
- How will your team monitor implementation and progress?

Key Milestones

- The team has conducted usability testing of the selected processes and tools, as needed.
- A program or strategy is being implemented to make the transition from the old way of doing business to the new way in an identified area or among specified audience (pilot test).
- The agency has feedback mechanisms in place (for example, to collect responses from stakeholders, assess pilot results, and determine if the program or solution is having the intended results).
- A decision has been reached after a pilot test about whether to move forward with the program or strategy and how.
- The team has adjusted implementation strategies, as needed, based on usability testing, pilot testing, or other findings.

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings

Monitoring and evaluation help teams make informed decisions about their family empowerment programs and strategies. While presented here as a final phase, they should be integrated into earlier parts of the change and implementation process.

Overview

Teams collect and use data to assess progress against plans, measure outcomes, adjust the intervention or implementation strategies, and, finally, make decisions about the future direction of implementation.

Teams may conduct one or more of the following interrelated approaches (Capacity Building Center for States, 2019c):

- **Monitoring** – to support management oversight by assessing whether activities are conducted and outputs generated as planned, according to schedule, and on budget
- **Fidelity assessment** – to examine whether staff and family leaders are delivering the program or strategy as intended

- ▸ **Formative evaluation** – to guide improvements to the intervention
- ▸ **Summative evaluation** – to assess the intervention's effectiveness

The approaches that are most appropriate may reflect the nature and scope of the intervention, where the team is in the implementation process, and available resources.

Findings from monitoring, fidelity assessment, and formative evaluation can be used to make adjustments to the program or strategy as needed. Once an intervention is no longer being adjusted, a summative evaluation can answer questions about whether it contributes to desired outcomes, under what circumstances, and whether it has better results than alternate approaches. Findings, in turn, can inform decisions about whether the new program or strategy will be spread, adjusted, or discontinued.

While sustainability should be considered during initial implementation planning, at this point, teams should revisit and solidify sustainability plans. Sustainability planning should consider organizational capacity as it relates to resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership.

Application

To set a framework for monitoring and evaluation, your team may find it helpful to create a logic model. A logic model presents the program or strategy's inputs (needed resources), activities, outputs (immediate results), and expected short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. It provides a structured snapshot of what teams plan to do and what they expect as a result (Capacity Building Center for States, 2019c).

Next, **identify measures and data collection processes** to examine:
- ▸ Fidelity – to see if the program or strategy was implemented as expected and in accordance with the original model
- ▸ Implementation processes – to understand the experiences and reactions of participants and the organizational fit of the program or strategy
- ▸ Outcomes – to assess changes that occur as a result of the program or strategy

Teams may want to get help from internal or external evaluators or data analysts, as needed.

After collecting and analyzing data, **create feedback loops** with key stakeholders to report progress, challenges, and lessons learned. Celebrate successes.

Once initial data are collected and analyzed, think about what the data suggest regarding how the program or strategy may need to be changed. If your team is not seeing expected outcomes, think about whether that is because of the program or strategy or the way it was implemented. After needed adjustments are made, continue to monitor results.

Take some time to consider whether the program has been effective and the value of continuing. Meet with stakeholders and partners to determine whether to further spread, adjust, or discontinue the program or strategy. If the decision is to move forward, explore what new supports and capacity are needed and **plan for sustainability**. (For more information on using data to make decisions and planning for sustainability, see the "Change and Implementation in Practice: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings" brief and the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide.)

Family Empowerment Scenario: Monitor, Evaluate, and Apply Findings

To improve family empowerment and family voice at the system level, an agency introduces several interrelated strategies, including:

- ▸ Building a cadre of family leaders to contribute their knowledge and insight to agency operations
- ▸ Inviting family leaders to become members of program and policy development workgroups
- ▸ Introducing communication strategies, such as an email news alert, to present new initiatives and desired outcomes to family leaders
- ▸ Holding discussion groups with family leaders and parents currently receiving child welfare services and encouraging them to identify problems, underlying causes of the problems, and potential solutions

Evaluators collect feedback from family leaders, parents, and agency staff through surveys and focus groups to determine the strategies' early strengths and areas for improvement. Initial assessments suggest that family leaders need additional supports to understand how to most effectively advocate for families in an agency workgroup setting. In response, the agency offers additional training and coaching for family leaders. As part of the assessment of short-term outcomes, the agency looks at the number of family leaders and the nature of their roles in the agency. The agency also sets up mechanisms to track family input into policies and CQI activities. Given positive early indications, the agency continues and expands the strategies and puts into place plans to assess long-term outcomes.

Sample Questions to Consider

Consider the following questions related to monitoring, evaluating, and applying findings. (See the appendix for fillable worksheets.)

Questions Related to Formative Evaluation:

- ▸ Are reliable data being collected on family empowerment programs or strategies on a routine basis?
- ▸ What do the data tell you about the program or strategy's strengths and areas for improvement?
- ▸ What feedback has your team received from key stakeholders, including family leaders and other family members?
- ▸ Does the program or strategy have good cultural fit with the setting or agency?
- ▸ Has the intervention been implemented consistently and as intended? If not, why?
- ▸ Is the program or strategy meeting initial expectations? Why or why not?
- ▸ How can challenges be addressed?
- ▸ What changes might improve fidelity in implementation?
- ▸ What changes are needed to improve achievements of desired outcomes? Will these changes maintain the intent of the model?
- ▸ What information is critical to communicate to stakeholders?
- ▸ What additional data do you need to fully understand what is happening?

Questions Related to Summative Evaluation:

- What evidence is there that the program or strategy is effective?
- To what extent did the program or strategy achieve desired outcomes?
- Under what conditions and for whom was the intervention most effective?
- What program aspects are having unintended effects?
- What information is critical to communicate to stakeholders?

Questions Related to Future Implementation and Sustainability:

- What components of the program or strategy should be maintained? Why?
- Do agency leaders, staff, family leaders, family members, and other stakeholders support expansion?
- Does the agency have sufficient capacity (including resources) to sustain implementation? If not, how can capacity be built?
- What supports are needed based on the prior experiences?
- Have any lessons learned been discussed with stakeholders? How can these lessons be applied to new sites?
- What processes will be in place to monitor ongoing implementation and achievement of outcomes?

Key Milestones

- The team has developed a plan for monitoring and evaluation.
- The team has collected and assessed data on implementation fidelity to ensure the program or strategy is being implemented as expected.
- The program or strategy and implementation processes have been adjusted, as needed, based on findings from a formative evaluation.
- Data have been collected and assessed on outcomes and program effectiveness.
- Based on the evidence collected, agency and family leaders have made decisions as to whether the program or strategy will be implemented to a wider audience, adjusted, or discontinued.
- The team has developed a sustainability plan and has discussed it with stakeholders.

6. Bringing It All Together

I remember when I first became involved with the Parent Partner Program. I was invited to attend a workshop with birth parents. I was the only foster parent attending, and I had some fear about how I would be received, and quite honestly, about how I would react to the stories and dialogue shared by the birth parents. By the second day, my fears had receded, and mind and heart were opened. Eventually, I became the foster parent consultant for the program and have met many amazing birth and foster parents. We have accomplished much because fears have been alleviated, perceptions have been altered, and we all realize we are here for one thing—the welfare of our children.

— Parent Consultant

Family empowerment and leadership are vital forces changing the nature of today's child welfare services. Forming meaningful partnerships between family leaders and agency staff and working together to implement family empowerment programs and strategies can be complicated efforts. Productive partnerships and successful implementation efforts can best be achieved through multiple strategies, including:

▸ Building the capacity of family leaders and agency staff through family empowerment training, coaching, and ongoing professional development activities, including the FELA e-learning modules and curriculum (access at https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/course/view.php?id=18)

▸ Following structured, research-informed approaches to change and implementation processes that begin with identifying needs and developing theories of change and then deliberately moving into identifying solutions, planning and implementing new programs and strategies, and evaluating and applying findings

▸ Involving family members in all phases of implementation and providing them with an active voice in decision-making and change efforts

▸ Recognizing the impact of the agency's culture and climate on family empowerment efforts and fostering a culture that values family leadership

▸ Providing an infrastructure and needed resources that support sustainable family empowerment and leadership activities

▸ Using data effectively to inform needs and readiness assessments, evaluate progress and outcomes, and make improvements, as needed

Remember that change does not occur overnight, but rather takes time, patience, and concerted efforts. Working together, you and your partners can "move the needle" on family empowerment and leadership and, in doing so, continue to improve outcomes for children and families.

Additional Resources

The following resources contain additional information on family empowerment and engagement, as well as on the aspects of the change and implementation process described in this guide.

Family Empowerment and Engagement

▸ Becoming a Family-Focused System [webpage]
Capacity Building Center for States
https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/family-focused-system/

▸ Family Empowerment Leadership Academy [webpage]
Capacity Building Center for States
https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/family-empowerment-leadership-academy

▸ Engagement and Parent Partnering Programs [webpage]
California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
http://www.cebc4cw.org/search/topic-areas/

▸ Engaging Families [webpage]
Child Welfare Information Gateway
https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/famcentered/engaging/

▸ Family Engagement Inventory [webpage]
Child Welfare Information Gateway
https://www.childwelfare.gov/FEI/

Problem Exploration

▸ "Change and Implementation in Practice: Problem Exploration"
Capacity Building Center for States (2018)
https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/problem-exploration/

▸ CQI Training Academy: Foundations of Continuous Quality Improvement, "Unit 3: Identifying and Understanding Issues" [online training]
JBS International, Inc. (2015)
http://learn.childwelfare.gov (registration required)

▸ Focused CQI Services Indepth Skill Building, "Module 5: Data Analysis for CQI – Identifying and Understanding the Problem"
Capacity Building Center for States (2017)
http://learn.childwelfare.gov (registration required)

▸ Organizational Self-Study on Family Engagement
National Resource Center for Family Permanency and Family Connections (2010)
http://www.nccwe.org/toolkits/family-engagement/self_study.htm

▸ Determine the Root Cause: 5 Whys
iSix Sigma (n.d.)
https://www.isixsigma.com/tools-templates/cause-effect/determine-root-cause-5-whys/

Teaming

- ▸ "Change and Implementation in Practice: Teaming"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2018)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/teaming/

- ▸ *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation:*
  Volume 1: Teaming and Communication Linkages
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol1_teaming.pdf

- ▸ *Design Team Manual*
  Butler Institute for Families (2013)
  http://ncwwi.org/files/Org_Environment/Design-Team-Manual.pdf

Developing a Theory of Change

- ▸ "Change and Implementation in Practice: Theory of Change"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2018)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/theory-of-change/

- ▸ Center for Theory of Change [website]
  http://www.theoryofchange.org

- ▸ *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A Practical Guide to Theory*
  Development
  Anderson (2006), Aspen Institute Roundtable on Change
  http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/rcc/rcccommbuildersapproach.pdf

- ▸ *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation, Volume 2: Exploration*
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol2_exploration.pdf

Selecting, Adapting, and Designing Solutions

- ▸ "Change and Implementation in Practice: Intervention Selection and Adaptation/Design"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2018)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-selection-design-adaptation/

- ▸ *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation,*
  Volume 2: Exploration (includes the "Innovation Assessment and Section Tool")
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol2_exploration.pdf

- ▸ Development, Implementation, and Assessment Toolkit
  "Section 3: Assess and Select an Innovation"
  "Section 6: Develop or Adapt the Innovation"
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  Available through CapLEARN (registration required) at http://learn.childwelfare.gov

- ▸ *Selecting and Implementing Evidence-Based Practices: A Guide for Child and Family Serving*
  Agencies
  Walsh, Rolls Reutz, & Williams (2015)
  California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
  http://www.cebc4cw.org/files/ImplementationGuide-Apr2015-onlinelinked.pdf

Readiness

- "Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness."
  Capacity Building Center for States (2018)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/

- "Change and Implementation Readiness Assessment Tool"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2019)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/

- "Becoming a Family-Focused System: Assessing Culture and Climate"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2019)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/family-focused-system/assessing-culture-and-climate-brief/

- "Willing, Able, Ready: Basics and Policy Implications of Readiness as a Key Component for Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions"
  Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2014)
  http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/14/IWW/ib_Readiness.pdf

Implementation Planning and Capacity Building

- "Change and Implementation in Practice: Implementation Planning and Capacity Building"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2019)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/implementation-capacity-building/

- Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy [online training]
  Capacity Building Center for States (2016)
  https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/course/view.php?id=18)

- *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation, Volume 3: Installation*
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol3_installation.pdf

- Active Implementation Hub [online tool]
  National Implementation Research Network (n.d.)
  https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-hub

- *Selecting and Implementing Evidence-Based Practices: A Guide for Child and Family Serving Systems*
  California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (2015)
  http://www.cebc4cw.org/implementing-programs/guide/

Testing, Piloting, and Staging

- "Change and Implementation in Practice: Testing, Piloting, and Staging"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2019)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-testing-piloting-staging/

- *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation. Volume 4: Initial Implementation*
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol4_initial_implementation.pdf

- Active Implementation Hub, "Module 5, Topic 2: Usability testing" [online learning]
  NIRN (n.d.)
  https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-5/topic-2-usability-testing
- "Tips and Recommendations for Successfully Pilot Testing Your Program"
  Office of Adolescent Health (n.d.)
  https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/pilot-testing-508.pdf

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings

- "Change and Implementation in Practice: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings"
  Capacity Building Center for States (2019)
  https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/monitoring-evaluating/
- *Formative Evaluation Toolkit: A Step-by-Step Guide and Resources for Evaluating Program Implementation and Early Outcomes*
  James Bell Associates (2018)
  https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/formative-evaluation-toolkit
- CQI Training Academy, "Unit 6: Monitoring and Assessing Solutions"
  JBS International and Children's Bureau
  Available through CapLEARN (registration required) at https://learn.childwelfare.gov
- "A Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Practices in Child Welfare Child Welfare"
  Research & Evaluation Framework Workgroup (2014)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pii_ttap_framework.pdf
- *Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation, Volume 5: Full Implementation*
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol5_full_implementation.pdf

References

Aarons, G. A., Hurlburt, M., & McCue Horwitz, S. (2011). Advancing a conceptual model of evidence-based practice implementation in public service sectors. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 38,* 4–23.

Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services. (2004). *Theory of change: A practical tool for action, results, and learning*. Seattle, WA: Authors. Retrieved from http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/

Barbee, A. P., Christensen, D., Antle, B., Wandersman, A., & Cahn, K. (2011). Successful adoption and implementation of a comprehensive casework practice model in a public child welfare agency: Application of the Getting to Outcomes (GTO) model. *Children & Youth Services Review, 33*(5), 622–633. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.11.008

Berrick, J.D., Cohen, E., and Anthony, E. (2011). Partnering with parents: Promising approaches to improve reunification outcomes for children in foster care. *Journal of Family Strengths, 11*(1), 1–13.

Bertram, R. M., Blase, K. A., & Fixsen, D. L. (2015). Improving programs and outcomes: Implementation frameworks and organizational change. *Research on Social Work Practice, 25*, 477–487.

Capacity Building Center for States. (2016). *Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy: Curriculum*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Capacity Building Center for States. (2017). *A guide to five dimensions of organizational capacity: Support for realizing your agency's potential*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/organizational-capacity-guide/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018a). *Change and implementation in practice: Overview*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/119888.pdf?r=1&rpp=10&upp=0&w=+NATIVE('recno=119888')&m=1

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018b). *Change and implementation in practice: Problem exploration*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/problem-exploration/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018c). *Change and implementation in practice: Teaming*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/teaming/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018d). *Change and implementation in practice: Theory of change*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/teaming/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018e). *Change and implementation in practice: Intervention selection and design/adaptation*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-selection-design-adaptation/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018f). *Change and implementation in practice: Readiness*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2019a). *Change and implementation in practice: Implementation planning and capacity building*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/implementation-capacity-building/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2019b). *Change and implementation in practice: Intervention testing, piloting, and staging*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-testing-piloting-staging/

Capacity Building Center for States. (2019c). *Change and implementation in practice: monitoring, evaluating, and applying findings*. Manuscript in preparation. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available soon from https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/monitoring-evaluating/

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. (2015a). *Building capacity to manage change and improve child welfare practice. Brief #2*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/101167.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27SIMPLE_SRCH+ph+is+%27%27Building+Capacity+to+Manage+Change+and+Improve+Child+Welfare+Practice%27%27%27%29&upp=0&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&rpp=25&r=1&m=1

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. (2015b). *Child welfare organizational capacities. Brief #1*.Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Record?r=1&rpp=25&upp=0&w=NATIVE%28%27BASIC+ph+is+%27%27child+welfare+capacity+building+collaborative+brief%27%27%27%29&m=1&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). Family Engagement Inventory, Family Engagement Program Level Strategies (webpage). Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/FEI/program-strategies/

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2016). *Family engagement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f-fam-engagement/

Children's Bureau. (2014). *A guide to implementing improvement through the CFSP and CFSR*. Retrieved from http://kt.cfsrportal.org/ktwebservice/download.php?code=39fd3c0f6f1a910b5ff0c18b4e544fe395d419a7&d=73148&u=publicdownload

Durlak, J. (2013). *The importance of quality implementation for research, practice, and policy*. (ASPE Research Brief). Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED541356.pdf

Durlak, J. A., & DuPre, E. P. (2008). Implementation matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*(3–4), 327–350. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-008-9165-0

Dymnicki, A., Wandersman, A., Osher, D., Grigorescu, V., & Huang, L. (2014). *Willing, able, ready: Basics and policy implications of readiness as a key component for implementation of evidence-based interventions* [APSE Issue Brief]. Retrieved from http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/14/IWW/ib_Readiness.pdf

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, the National Implementation Research Network. Retrieved from http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/implementation-research-synthesis-literature

Framework Workgroup. (2014). *A framework to design, test, spread, and sustain effective practice in child welfare*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pii_ttap_framework.pdf

Glisson, C. (2015). The role of organizational culture and climate in innovation and effectiveness. *Human Service Organization: Management, Leadership & Governance, 39*, 245–250.

Maciolek, S., Arena, C., Fisher, C., & Helfgott, K. (2014.) *From start to finish: Child welfare implementation teams that go the distance*. Baltimore, MD: U.S. University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth H. Young Center for Children and Families. Retrieved from http://socialwork.umaryland.edu/cwa/RYC/assets/ACCWIC-2014-Implementation_Teams.pdf

Meyers, D. C., Durlak, J. A., & Wandersman, A. (2012). The quality implementation framework: A synthesis of critical steps in the implementation process. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(3–4), 462–480.

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care. (2010). *Improving child welfare outcomes through systems of care initiative*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/FamilyInvolvement_Report.pdf

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care. (2011). *Building agency capacity for family involvement in child welfare*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/BuildingAgencyCapacity.pdf

Nilsen, P. (2015). Making sense of implementation theories, models and frameworks. *Implementation Science, 10*, 53–66.

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project. (2016). *The development, implementation, and assessment approach*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/pii-develop-implement-assess-approach

Scaccia, J. P., Cook, B. S., Lamont, A., Wandersman, A., Castellow, J., Katz, J., & Beidas, R. S. (2015). A practical implementation science heuristic for organizational readiness: R=MC2. *Journal of Community Psychology, 43*(4), 484–501. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676714/

Walsh, C., Rolls Reutz, J., & Williams, R. (2015). *Selecting and implementing evidence-based practices: A guide for child and family serving systems* (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: California Evidence- Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Retrieved from http://www.cebc4cw.org/files/ImplementationGuide-Apr2015-onlinelinked.pdf

Wandersman, A., Chien, V. H., & Katz, J. (2012). Toward an evidence-based system for innovation support for implementing innovations with quality: Tools, training, technical assistance, and quality assurance/quality improvement. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(3/4), 445–459. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-012-9509-7

Appendix: Sample Questions to Consider

The following questions, which appear throughout this guide, can help inform your change and implementation activities.

Problem Exploration: Questions to Consider

▸ What information does your agency know about family engagement and empowerment?

▸ What information or data suggest there is a problem, need, or opportunity for change? (For example, Child and Family Services Review results, survey data, focus group findings)

▸ What is the scope of the problem, need, or opportunity?

▸ What do data suggest are causes of the problem/need for change or origin of the opportunity? What are some underlying or root causes of existing problems?

▸ What "story" do the data tell? How can the data be presented in ways that family members and agency staff find meaningful?

▸ What will the agency and families achieve by addressing the identified need(s) or opportunity?

▸ What will be different from today? What is the potential impact of changes in family empowerment?

▸ How are the identified needs related to the organizational culture and climate? To the child welfare system/structure? To existing policies? To practices?

▸ What facilitators and barriers to making changes exist?

▸ Have there been previous attempts to address the need for family empowerment? What were the results of previous programs?

▸ What additional sources of data should the agency and family leaders explore?

Teaming: Questions to Consider

▸ What is the purpose of and expectation for the team?

▸ What roles and expertise are required for an effective team? Who has the right experience and skills for the team?

▸ Does the team represent diverse perspectives? Does the team represent sufficient numbers of parents?

▸ Should there be a single team or several specialized teams?

▸ What specific tasks need to be performed and who will accomplish them? How will expectations be documented?

▸ How will the team communicate? Whose responsibility is it to ensure that information is communicated to the right people?

▸ How will the team make decisions? How will the team communicate results?

Developing a Theory of Change: Questions to Consider

▸ What final outcomes or changes do you want to achieve?

▸ Which root causes will best help you address the identified need/outcome?

▸ What conditions, changes, or behaviors need to be in place or barriers overcome to reach your outcome?

- What activities or strategies will lead to your outcomes?
- What assumptions explain how the conditions or changes will lead to outcomes?
- What short- or intermediate-term outcomes will contribute to the final outcomes?
- How can you track and measure progress toward outcomes?

Selecting, Adapting, and Designing Solutions: Questions to Consider

Questions Related to Assessing Possible Solutions:

- What different solutions (new programs, initiatives, and practice changes) might improve or enhance family engagement and empowerment in your agency?
- Does your agency need solutions at the case, peer, and/or system levels?
- What does the available research or published literature say about potential programs or practices and their outcomes? What do other child welfare agency leaders and family leaders say?
- What evidence indicates that each program or strategy will address your agency's specific needs or opportunities?
- Do the programs or strategies align with the team's theory of change?
- Do the programs or strategies reflect family-centered and strengths-based values? Other agency values? Family values?
- How do the programs or strategies fit with the agency's culture and climate and the current way of doing things?
- What might be some potential challenges to implementation of each possible solution? (For example, costs, policy mandates, staffing resources, prevailing attitudes)
- What do stakeholders say about the various options?
- Which solution seems the most feasible?

Questions Related to Using/Adapting an Existing Solution or Designing a New Solution:

- Will your team use or adapt an existing program/strategy model or design a new one? Why?
- What are the objectives of the selected program or strategy? What are the core components?
- What aspects of the program or strategy will need to change to adapt to your environment or audience (e.g., to be culturally responsive)? What aspects should remain the same?
- Are the core components and key activities well defined? Are the expected behaviors clear? Can they be easily taught and put into place?
- What capacity does the agency need to support the program or strategy? (Think about changes in resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership.)
- Are there experts available who can provide guidance on this program/strategy?
- How will your team know if the program or strategy is working? How will your team measure success?

Readiness: Questions to Consider

▸ Is the agency prepared to pursue a change effort to improve family empowerment?

▸ Is the agency prepared to put in place the identified family empowerment program or strategy?

▸ Have key stakeholder groups been involved in planning, including family leaders, agency leaders, and staff from multiple levels of the agency?

▸ Is there a shared commitment to change?

▸ Does the program fit with agency priorities? With leadership support? With family member concerns? With staff beliefs?

▸ Does the agency have the resources (funding, staff, and office space) available to implement the identified program or practice?

▸ Does the agency have the necessary infrastructure and implementation supports (e.g., recruitment, training, coaching) in place to support implementation?

▸ What policies or procedures may the agency need to develop or revise to support implementation?

▸ What new knowledge and skills will staff and family leaders need to successfully implement the program or practice?

▸ What may stand in the way of the program or strategy's success?

Implementation Planning and Capacity Building: Questions to Consider

▸ What tasks are required to prepare for and to implement the selected program or strategy? Who will be responsible? When will they occur and when will they be completed?

▸ What implementation supports need to be developed?

▸ What capacities does the agency need to develop?

▸ How will the agency improve the identified capacities? How will agency leaders and family leaders work together to build capacity?

▸ How can the agency and family leaders improve capacity to deal with adaptive challenges (ones that require new ways of thinking and working)?

▸ How will the agency and family leaders share knowledge on family empowerment and leadership? What types of learning or training events are needed?

▸ What systems does the agency have in place for coaching and supervision?

▸ What resources does the agency need to build capacity? What existing resources are available?

▸ How can new partnerships support capacity building?

▸ How will your team show progress in building capacity?

Testing, Piloting, and Staging: Questions to Consider

Questions Related to Usability Testing:

▸ What processes or tools will benefit from usability testing?

▸ Was the process or tool implemented as expected? Did staff, family members, or other users have any notable difficulties in using the tool or completing the process?

‣ Do data and feedback suggest that the process or tool should be adjusted?

‣ Is further testing needed?

Questions Related to Piloting:

‣ What is the purpose of the pilot?

‣ What factors should the team consider in selection of the pilot site(s) and schedule?

‣ What sites have the capacity for successful implementation?

‣ Did implementation go as planned?

‣ What feedback has the team received about the program or strategy?

‣ What effect did the new program or process have on desired short-term outcomes?

‣ What can the team do to prepare for possible expansion? What changes must be made?

Questions Related to Staging:

‣ What are the proposed approach and timeframe for rolling out and scaling up the program or strategy?

‣ How will additional sites/populations be prepared?

‣ How will readiness be addressed and capacity be developed?

‣ How will your team monitor implementation and progress?

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings: Questions to Consider

Questions Related to Formative Evaluation:

‣ Are reliable data being collected on family empowerment programs or strategies on a routine basis?

‣ What do the data tell you about the program or strategy's strengths and areas for improvement?

‣ What feedback has your team received from key stakeholders, including family leaders and other family members?

‣ Does the program or strategy have good cultural fit with the setting or agency?

‣ Has the intervention been implemented consistently and as intended? If not, why?

‣ Is the program or strategy meeting initial expectations? Why or why not?

‣ How can challenges be addressed?

‣ What changes might improve fidelity in implementation?

‣ What changes are needed to improve achievements of desired outcomes? Will these changes maintain the intent of the model?

‣ What information is critical to communicate to stakeholders?

‣ What additional data do you need to fully understand what is happening?

Questions Related to Summative Evaluation:

‣ What evidence is there that the program or strategy is effective?

‣ To what extent did the program or strategy achieve desired outcomes?

‣ Under what conditions and for whom was the intervention most effective?

‣ What program aspects are having unintended effects?

‣ What information is critical to communicate to stakeholders?

Questions Related to Future Implementation and Sustainability:

- What components of the program or strategy should be maintained? Why?
- Do agency leaders, staff, family leaders, family members, and other stakeholders support expansion?
- Does the agency have sufficient capacity (including resources) to sustain implementation? If not, how can capacity be built?
- What supports are needed based on the prior experiences?
- Have lessons learned been discussed with stakeholders? How can these lessons be applied to new sites?
- What processes will be in place to monitor ongoing implementation and achievement of outcomes?