

Change and Implementation in Practice

Readiness Assessment Tool



Background and Instructions

Purpose

The *Change and Implementation Readiness Assessment Tool* is designed to help child welfare implementation teams think about readiness for change and implementation and support related planning. Teams can use the tool to consider readiness in two ways:

- ◆ Readiness to make a change from established ways of doing things to address an identified problem, need, or opportunity
- ◆ Readiness for implementation of a specific program, practice, or other intervention

Assessing readiness helps child welfare agencies prepare for a successful change initiative and proactively build capacity in needed areas.

Background

This tool complements information and research presented in the Capacity Building Center for States' brief "[Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness](#)."¹ The brief and the tool draw heavily on readiness research and synthesis (Dymnicki, Wandersman, Osher, Grigorescu, & Huang, 2014; Scaccia et al., 2015) and the work of the Wandersman Center.

Teams can use this tool to understand the basics of readiness and stimulate discussion. While grounded in research and theory, the tool has not been psychometrically validated. To gain a more indepth understanding of readiness, particularly for large-scale initiatives, teams may add to their assessments using validated diagnostic tools that offer more precise measures.²

1. For more information and resources on readiness, see <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/>

2. Such tools are included in the appendix to the "[Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness](#)" brief.

Tool Structure

This tool has three parts:

Part I. Checklist of Key Change and Implementation Milestones

This section presents a checklist that implementation teams can use to document where they are in a change and implementation process. This checklist directs users to key change and implementation milestones and also informs them of which tables to complete in part II.

Part II. Readiness Items

This section presents research-informed items associated with readiness. There are two readiness item tables that teams can use at different times.

Table A. Readiness for Change

Teams should complete this table when they have (1) identified a problem or need in their agency but not yet selected a specific intervention to address it, OR (2) selected a specific intervention but have not already assessed readiness for change.

The items in this table are organized into two component areas:

- ◆ **Motivation for change** – the willingness or desire of individuals in an organization to change, as reflected in their beliefs and attitudes (7 items).
- ◆ **General/foundational capacity** – aspects of an organization’s healthy functioning that reflect its potential to initiate and sustain change (22 items).

Table B. Readiness for Implementation

Teams should complete this table after they have selected a specific program, practice, or other intervention to address an identified problem or need.

The items in this table are organized into two component areas:

- ◆ **Motivation for the specific intervention** – the willingness or desire of individuals in an organization to adopt an intervention, as reflected in their beliefs and attitudes (11 items).
- ◆ **Intervention-specific capacity** – specific conditions and supports needed to implement a particular program or practice effectively (15 items).

For each item, the table also identifies one of five broad dimensions of organizational capacity—organizational resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, or engagement and partnership. The Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative uses these dimensions as a framework for thinking about organizational capacity.³ This information may prove useful for agencies interested in categorizing areas of strong capacity and areas that may benefit from additional attention.

Part III. Summary of Readiness Findings and Areas to Address

This section provides a place for teams to summarize key findings from the readiness assessment, including key strengths, areas to develop, possible challenges or barriers to effective change and implementation, and potential strategies for addressing the challenges or barriers.

³. For more information on organizational capacity, see [A Guide to Five Dimensions of Organizational Capacity: Support for Realizing Your Agency's Potential](#).

Tool Application/Instructions

Before using this tool, agencies should consider who, when, and how.

WHO should participate in completion of the tool?

This tool is designed to be used by implementation teams that are responsible for overseeing and guiding their child welfare agency's efforts through a change and implementation process. Teams should consist of individuals with diverse expertise and perspectives from across the agency and stakeholder groups who will be affected by the change.⁴

WHEN should teams use the tool?

Teams may use this tool at different points in a change and implementation process:

- ◆ At the beginning of the change process, teams can use the tool to assess readiness for change (table A).
- ◆ Before implementing a selected intervention, teams can use the tool to assess readiness for implementation (tables A and B).
- ◆ While piloting or staging the intervention, teams can use the tool to monitor changes in readiness and identify new capacity needs (table B).

The milestones checklist (part I) can help teams determine where their agency is in the change and implementation process and related readiness considerations.

HOW should teams administer the tool?

Before administering the tool, designated leads should clearly communicate the purpose of the tool and how it will be used. They may share the "[Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness](#)" brief to orient others to basic concepts of readiness. They should also remind participants of the importance of a candid examination of readiness so that resources can be directed appropriately to build motivation and capacity and prepare the agency for successful implementation efforts.

Implementation team members can collectively complete the tool and rate their extent of readiness. Some teams may ask members to complete the tool individually, and then tally individual responses to inform a collective response and discussion. Agency teams may find it useful to identify one individual to serve as a facilitator for team discussions and help the group come to consensus in rating the various items.

To rate items, teams will need to consider existing sources of information and agency data, and also whether they need additional information or data (e.g., from surveys, focus groups, or use of other tools). When necessary, collecting additional data may extend the time involved in the assessment process; however, doing so should better inform and shape decisions for moving forward.

4. For more information on implementation teams, see the "[Change and Implementation in Practice: Teaming](#)" brief.

Item Rating Key

For the tables in part II, a rating framework is provided to generate discussion and assist teams in determining how ready their agency is for change and implementation. For each readiness item, teams should indicate one of the following:

- ◆ **Strongly agree:** Select this rating when the team strongly agrees with the item statement or when the readiness item is firmly in place. For items that reflect multiple individuals (e.g., staff believe change is needed), use this rating if the statement reflects **most people/groups**.
- ◆ **Partially agree:** Select this rating when the team only somewhat agrees with the statement or when the readiness item is under development. For items that reflect multiple individuals (e.g., staff believe change is needed), use this rating if the statement reflects **some people/groups** but not others, and indicate any group differences in the notes column. If the team agrees with part of the statement but not all (e.g., the agency has training but not coaching), use the “partially agree” rating and indicate in the notes column which pieces of the statement are in place and which ones are not.
- ◆ **Disagree:** Select this rating when the team disagrees with the item statement or when the readiness item is not present. For items that reflect multiple individuals (e.g., staff believe change is needed), use this rating if the statement reflects **few or no people/groups**.
- ◆ **Not sure:** Select this rating if information on the readiness item is unknown to the team. For such items, the team may find it beneficial to gather additional information to rate the item by conducting a survey or focus group, administering a different instrument to a broader group, and/or bringing additional individuals with knowledge of the item into the assessment process.⁵

Participants are encouraged to use the column marked “Notes/Evidence” to briefly document information or data used to support the rating selection for each item. Teams also may note strengths or challenges for that item, as well as outstanding questions.

Use of Findings

Teams can use findings from the assessment to develop a collective, broad understanding of the agency’s readiness for change and implementation and to identify areas for development. **It is unlikely that an agency will have strong agreement or be fully ready to go in all areas.** Items rated “partially agree” or “disagree” may point to areas where the agency needs to develop motivation or capacity to improve readiness.

Upon completion of part II, teams are encouraged to reflect on the assessment results and what they mean for moving forward. Teams should summarize the key assessment findings in part III and highlight:

- ◆ **Strengths** – these facilitators of change and implementation may include items marked “strongly agree” or aspects of those marked “partially agree.”
- ◆ **Areas to develop** – these may include items marked “disagree” or aspects of those marked “partially agree,” which may require capacity building to enhance readiness.
- ◆ **Key challenges** – these barriers or constraints are likely to impact the agency’s ability to effectively advance change and implementation processes.
- ◆ **Strategies** – these approaches help to address areas for further development and overcome identified challenges.
- ◆ **Priorities** – these areas are most important to address in the early stages of planning and during implementation.

This information will inform implementation planning and capacity building.⁶



For assistance with using this tool and assessing readiness in a child welfare agency, contact the Center for States. Find contact information for your state at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/map>

For more information and related resources on readiness, visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/>

5. To gather additional information, teams may use one of the other readiness instruments referenced in the appendix to the “[Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness](#)” brief or create a new one.

6. For additional information on next steps and strategies, see the “[Change and Implementation in Practice: Implementation Planning and Capacity Building](#)” brief.

Part I. Checklist of Key Change and Implementation Milestones

Mark whether your agency has achieved the following milestones⁷ in a change and implementation process. For areas not yet completed, see the “how to” resources in the related topic area on the Change and Implementation in Practice webpage.

Milestone	Yes	Not Yet	Topic Area for Additional Resources
A team was established to guide the change and implementation process.			Teaming
The problem or need was researched and clearly identified.			Problem Exploration
The root cause(s) of the problem was analyzed.			Problem Exploration
A theory of change was developed that reflects a clear pathway to move from identifying the problem to achieving a desired long-term outcome.			Theory of Change
An assessment of readiness for change was completed.			Readiness
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An appropriate intervention to address the root cause(s) of the identified problem was identified.			Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation
Core components and related activities of the intervention were clearly defined.			Intervention Selection and Design/Adaptation
Readiness for implementation was assessed. (Note: Readiness assessment may occur multiple times.)			Readiness
Strategies were identified to address readiness gaps, build capacity, and support implementation.			Implementation Planning and Capacity Building
Implementation plan was developed.			Implementation Planning and Capacity Building
Data were collected and used to monitor, assess, and adjust the intervention and implementation strategies.			Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings
Decision was made to continue, adjust, or discontinue the intervention based on evaluation findings.			Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings

⁷ The checklist highlights selected milestones in a change and implementation process followed by the Center for States but does not include all the important developments for moving the work forward.

Part II. Readiness Items

Teams that have not yet identified an appropriate intervention (i.e., they have only completed the milestones above the solid blue line in part I), should complete table A to assess readiness for change. Teams that have identified an appropriate intervention should complete tables A and B to assess readiness for implementation. (Note: If table A was recently completed, it does not need to be completed again.) Teams may also re-administer table B of the tool later in the process to monitor changes in items over time.

In responding to the items, think about the part of the agency (unit, division, full agency) that will be most affected by the change or specific intervention. If there are major differences across the agency, describe them in the notes column.

Rate each item in the readiness items table using the following rating scale:
SA = Strongly agree (fully ready to go)
PA = Partially agree (somewhat ready)
DA = Disagree (not yet ready)
NS = Not sure (need more information)

Table A. Readiness for Change

Table A has two components to complete, “A1. Motivation for Change” and “A2. General/Foundational Capacity.”

A1. Motivation for Change (MC)

#	Readiness Factor ⁸	Capacity Dimension ⁹	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
MC 1	Motivation	Culture & Climate	Leadership believes change is needed and beneficial.		
MC 2	Motivation	Culture & Climate	Leadership believes change is possible.		
MC 3	Motivation	Culture & Climate	Staff believe change is needed and beneficial.		
MC 4	Motivation	Culture & Climate	Staff believe change is possible.		
MC 5	Motivation	Engagement & Partnership	Stakeholders believe change is needed and beneficial.		
MC 6	Motivation	Engagement & Partnership	Stakeholders believe change is possible.		
MC 7	Motivation	Culture & Climate	There are shared resolve and commitment for change among agency leadership, staff, and stakeholders.		

8. This term refers to readiness factors described in “[Change and Implementation in Practice: Readiness.](#)”

9. This term refers to one of five dimensions of organizational capacity—resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, or engagement and partnership. For more information, see [A Guide to Five Dimensions of Organizational Capacity: Support for Realizing Your Agency's Potential.](#)

A2. General/Foundational Capacity (GC)

#	Readiness Factor	Capacity Dimension	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
GC 1	Resource Availability & Use	Resources	The agency has been successful in obtaining resources to support change and innovation.		
GC 2	Resource Availability & Use	Resources	There is stability among agency leadership, such as agency directors, administrators, and program managers.		
GC 3	Resource Availability & Use	Resources	Staffing levels support effective functioning and implementation of new programs and practices.		
GC 4	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has effective processes and supports for recruiting and selecting staff.		
GC 5	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has effective processes and supports for retaining staff.		
GC 6	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has an effective process for training new and existing agency staff.		
GC 7	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has an effective system for providing feedback to staff to develop and improve their skills through training, support, consultation, and/or coaching.		
GC 8	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has an effective process for communicating about change and new initiatives.		
GC 9	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has data systems and processes in place to support accurate and timely data collection, reporting, and analysis.		
GC 10	Supportive Structures	Infrastructure	The agency has quality assurance and continuous quality improvement systems in place.		
GC 11	Leadership	Knowledge & Skills	Leaders and managers demonstrate needed change management knowledge and skills to address adaptive and technical challenges.		

#	Readiness Factor	Capacity Dimension	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
GC 12	Staff Capacity	Knowledge & Skills	Staff understand the concepts and processes involved in change and implementation.		
GC 13	Staff Capacity	Knowledge & Skills	The agency has the internal expertise or ability to access external expertise to collect and analyze data.		
GC 14	Receptivity to Change (Culture)	Culture & Climate	Agency leaders support innovation and foster a learning organization.		
GC 15	Receptivity to Change (Culture)	Culture & Climate	The agency is generally receptive to change, and staff are willing to try new ways to address problems.		
GC 16	Culture	Culture & Climate	Leaders and managers routinely involve staff in decision-making.		
GC 17	Culture	Culture & Climate	Diversity of viewpoints is consistently sought and valued.		
GC 18	Climate	Culture & Climate	Staff feel they accomplish meaningful work.		
GC 19	Climate	Culture & Climate	Staff are able to manage stress and work demands.		
GC 20	Supportive Structures	Engagement & Partnership	The agency has structures and processes in place to engage youth, families, and resource parents in change initiatives.		
GC 21	Supportive Structures	Engagement & Partnership	The agency has structures (e.g., networks, workgroups) in place to engage system partners (e.g., courts, tribes, community service providers) in change initiatives.		
GC 22	Supportive Structures	Engagement & Partnership	The agency works together with system partners (e.g., courts, tribes, community service providers) toward shared goals of supporting children, youth, and families.		

Table B. Readiness for Implementation

The items below refer to readiness to implement a specific intervention that the agency has selected to address a problem, need, or opportunity. Table B has two components to complete, “B1. Motivation for a Specific Intervention” and “B2. Intervention-Specific Capacity.”

Rate each item in the readiness items table using the following rating scale:
SA = Strongly agree (fully ready to go)
PA = Partially agree (somewhat ready)
DA = Disagree (not yet ready)
NS = Not sure (need more information)

B1. Motivation for a Specific Intervention (MI)

#	Readiness Factor	Capacity Dimension	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
MI 1	Compatibility	Not Applicable	The intervention aligns with the agency's mission, values, and guiding principles.		
MI 2	Compatibility	NA	The intervention supports existing programs and initiatives and fits with how the agency does things.		
MI 3	Compatibility	NA	The intervention is compatible with the values of individuals who will deliver it (e.g., caseworkers, service providers).		
MI 4	Compatibility	NA	The intervention is compatible with the values of the intervention's target population (e.g., families receiving services).		
MI 5	Manageability (Simplicity)	NA	Leadership, staff, and stakeholders clearly understand the intervention.		
MI 6	Manageability (Simplicity)	NA	The intervention is viewed as “doable.”		
MI 7	Prioritization	NA	There are buy-in and support for the intervention.		
MI 8	Prioritization	NA	The intervention is embraced as a priority.		
MI 9	Relative Advantage	NA	The intervention is perceived as being better than other alternatives to address the problem and current practice.		
MI 10	Visibility of Outcomes	NA	The expected outcomes of the intervention are apparent to leadership, staff, and stakeholders.		
MI 11	Ability to Pilot	NA	The intervention can be tested in small ways prior to a full rollout.		

B2. Intervention-Specific Capacity (IC)

#	Readiness Factor	Capacity Dimension	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
IC 1	Resource Availability & Use	Resources	The agency has appropriate resources (e.g., staff, facilities, materials, and technology) to implement and sustain the identified intervention.		
IC 2	Program Champions	Resources	Program champions are willing to advocate for the intervention and devote efforts to ensure its success.		
IC 3	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has staff recruitment and selection systems and processes in place to secure appropriate staff (or contractors) to deliver the intervention.		
IC 4	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has training systems in place that can support competency needs for the intervention.		
IC 5	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has coaching systems in place that can support the application of skills in practice.		
IC 6	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has processes in place to monitor fidelity to the intervention (performance assessment).		
IC 7	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has data systems and processes in place to track and monitor intervention outputs and outcomes that inform decision-making.		

#	Readiness Factor	Capacity Dimension	Item	Rating	Notes/Evidence
IC 8	Implementation Supports	Infrastructure	The agency has policies and procedures in place to support the intervention.		
IC 9	Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities	Knowledge & Skills	Managers and staff have knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver the intervention.		
IC 10	Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities	Knowledge & Skills	Managers and staff have knowledge, skills, and abilities for monitoring the intervention.		
IC 11	Leadership Buy-In & Support	Culture & Climate	There is leadership and organizational support for the selected intervention (including state, county, local, and private child welfare agency leaders, as relevant).		
IC 12	Leadership Buy-In & Support	Culture & Climate	Agency leaders, staff, and stakeholders have a shared vision of the plans and desired outcomes for the intervention.		
IC 13	Relationships & Networks	Engagement & Partnership	Youth, families, and resource parents are engaged in the planning or implementation of the intervention.		
IC 14	Relationships & Networks	Engagement & Partnership	Key partner systems (e.g., courts, tribes, community service providers) are engaged in the planning or implementation of the intervention.		
IC 15	Relationships & Networks	Engagement & Partnership	Staff from different parts of the agency know what they need to do to help carry out the intervention.		

Part III. Summary of Readiness Findings and Areas to Address

Review and discuss the collective responses in tables A and/or B. Then, summarize overall findings in the table below. Include:

- ◆ **Key strengths** (selected from areas noted as “strongly agree” or aspects of “partially agree”)
- ◆ **Key areas for development** (selected from areas noted as “partially agree” and “disagree”) and **major challenges** or barriers that may affect readiness for implementation (e.g., leadership turnover, resource constraints, conflicting expectations, resistance to change)
- ◆ **Possible strategies** that teams can use to develop capacity or address the challenge/barrier and potential next steps

Use this summary and responses to the questions on the next page to support planning for implementation and capacity building.

Component	Strengths	Areas to Develop and Challenges	Possible Strategies and Next Steps
Motivation (From table A1 and/or B1)			
General/ Foundational Capacity (From table A2)			
Intervention-Specific Capacity (From table B2)			

For areas marked “not sure,” what information or data might be helpful and how can the team get such information or data?

Which of the five dimensions of organizational capacity (resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, or engagement and partnership) are strengths? Which ones have the most areas to be developed?

Which areas to be developed are most important to address early on?

Date:

Assessment participants:

References

- Capacity Building Center for States. (2018). *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/>
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