

Family-Driven Evaluation: Our Journey to Collaboration





Our Purpose

- **The purpose of this information is to provide a blueprint for developing a sustainable evaluation process that is family-driven, youth-guided and culturally and linguistically competent.**

Background

- This presentation describes the journey of one Family-Run Organization, Families as Allies, and the evaluator of a local Infant and Early Childhood System of Care Project, Beginnings Determine Success (BuDS) administered through the City of Jackson, MS to ensure the initiative's evaluation was family-driven.
- As families started to enroll in the project, differences in how family-driven evaluation was perceived became apparent, and the evaluator and the executive director of the family-run organization used this as an opportunity to further explore how to make evaluation as family-driven as possible.

Learning Objectives



- Identify at least three barriers to family-driven evaluation and the assumptions and misperceptions that underlie them.
- Describe at least three strategies families/family-run organizations and evaluators can use in partnership to make evaluation more family-driven.
- Outline at least four practices family-run organizations can put in place to ensure family-driven evaluation, including incorporating these practices into contractual agreements.

Family-Driven Care Definition



Family-driven means families have a primary decision making role in the care of their own children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, state, tribe, territory and nation.

Family-Driven Care Definition Related to Evaluation

- Families and youth, providers and administrators embrace the concept of sharing decision-making and responsibility for outcomes.
- Families and family-run organizations provide direction for decisions that impact funding for services, treatments, and supports, and advocate for families and youth to have choices.
- Providers take the initiative to change policy and practice from provider-driven to family-driven.
- Administrators allocate staff, training, support and resources to make family-driven practice work at the point where services and supports are delivered to children, youth, and families and where family and youth-run organizations are funded and sustained.



Our Journey Begins...

- Dismantling old notions of evaluation processes
- Creating common language and messaging
- Understanding our audience
- Expanding our outreach and support
- Further defining roles of key partners
- Emphasis on outcomes families want rather than data evaluators want

Assumptions and Interpretations

HOW WE MISSED THE MARK

- Assuming that all key partners know and understand the concept of family-driven care in both theory and practice.
- Assuming that all efforts to support families will be family-driven and that we are all speaking the same language.
- Assuming that data collected will be family-driven and not evaluator driven.

COMMON LANGUAGE TO DEFINE WHO WE ARE



Our Process

Measure
Understanding
of the Model

Provide
Common
Messaging and
Processes for
Service
Approach

Establish Roles
and
Interventions
with Fidelity to
the Model

Evaluate at
each level with
Input from
Families

Measuring Understanding of Family-Driven Care

- Not **assuming** that everyone knows and fully understands how family-driven care is defined.
- Data collection can begin with a brief assessment of family-driven care to all partners.
- Data collected would be beneficial in starting the process of training and support from internal to external consistency.
- This would also ensure that there are no gaps in messaging and common language.

Initial Data Collection on Family-Driven Care

- Defining family-driven care among System-of-Care partners presented challenges and differences when evaluation was introduced. This was largely correlated to preconceived notions about the relevance and purpose of evaluation in System-of-Care work.
- Initially, a brief open-ended instrument was developed to gauge depth of knowledge around family-driven care using the respondents' own knowledge, experiences and opinions.

Respective Viewpoints from Initial Assessment



1. They had different definitions of family-driven care.
2. Their respective areas of expertise influenced their definitions of family-driven care and the values they brought to evaluation.
3. System partners had different perceptions of how the families and the family-run organization ensure family-driven work.
4. They hadn't developed any processes to develop consensus around family-driven evaluation.

01

That having a positive working relationship meant that they had shared definitions and viewpoints.

02

That because the evaluator spent a fair amount of time at the family-run organization, he/she had absorbed the meaning of family-driven care and its application to evaluation.

03

That the responsibility for an initiative being family-driven falls on the family-run organization.

Underlying Assumptions

Importance of Common Messaging and Language

- Are all partners who share in the process using the same language when supporting families regardless of years of experience?
- Are we creating an environment that ensures families feel comfortable driving everything that happens, including evaluation?
- Do all key partners regularly reflect on how family-driven their work is and seek input from families about this?



Family-Driven Outcomes versus Evaluator-Driven Outcomes

Old Notions of Program Evaluation

- **The role of the evaluator has typically been to assess the scope of work and devise a plan to collect clean data. This means, “I will provide a plan of action that would yield the highest possible return on clean data for reporting.”**
- **However, this is most often completed without input from families, and in some cases the partners themselves.**

Important Point to
Consider in Service
Delivery

Families are more engaged when they realize that someone is listening to their input and that they can affect the types and quality of services they receive. Once this connection is established, they are typically more invested in evaluation than anyone.



Defining Roles and Interventions

Remember:

- Families already have interest and expertise.

It's important to:

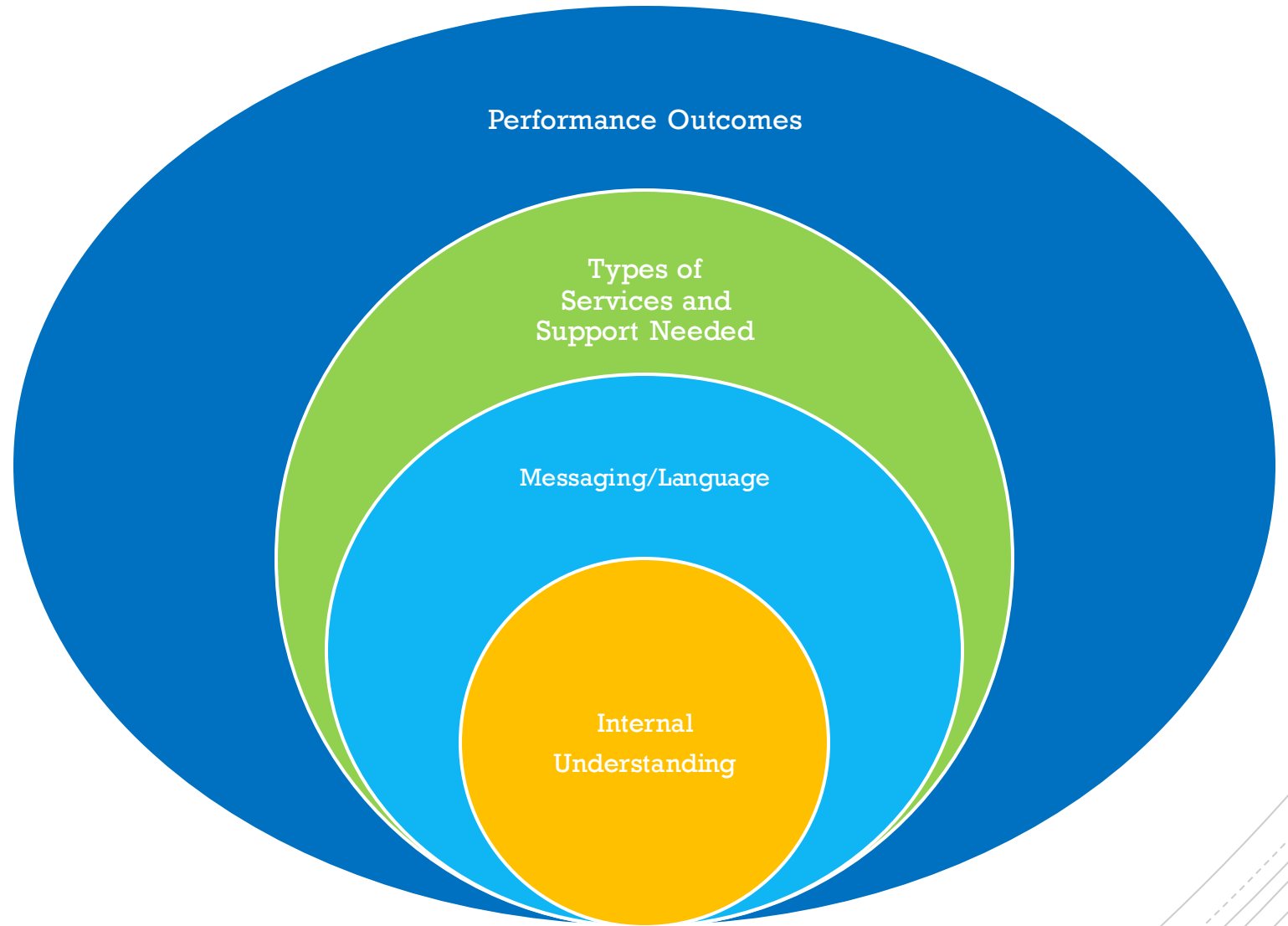
- Engage families and support their feedback in defining program outcomes.
- Use language that shows families are already constantly evaluating.
- Partner with the Lead Family Contact to support initial families who emerge and can facilitate development and data collection.
- This sets the stage for integrating evaluation into everything we do. It is not a separate process. Families want to know if things are actually working for their kids. Families have a vested interest in changing services, programs and systems from provider-driven to family-driven so that things will work better for all families in the long run.

Make it Fit!

- **Ensure outreach approaches are as inclusive as possible in the recruitment and enrollment of families in the process. This can be achieved by using families in the design and outreach development.**
- **Ensure all components fit into an overall plan of action that will be ever-evolving into a system of care that will benefit both programs and families alike.**



Tiered Evaluation Process





Important Steps

- The first step they took after this analysis was to train the evaluator in family-driven care, including access to national resources that made sense to him as an evaluator.
- The second step they took was creating and administering a survey about the definition of family-driven care to project partners.
- As families became enrolled in the project, the evaluator and executive director then took the third step, training and engaging families in evaluation, including gathering data about how families experienced these opportunities and any changes in the project that resulted from their involvement.

Sustainability and Next Steps

1. Incorporating evaluation costs (including database upgrades) into all proposals.
2. Ensuring that there was a deliberate and systematic process to train anyone interacting with the family-run organization about family-driven care.
3. Examining outreach and training material and practices to support consistent messaging.
4. Designing contracts, including those for evaluation, with family-driven expectations and deliverables.



It's a Team Effort

- This process can truly provide limitless opportunities to empower families while really understanding the core of their need through data collection. Understanding that there are differences between being familiar with family-driven care and fully grasping the scope of this approach using evaluation can change our system from a provider-driven model to one that is family-driven in all aspects.