

# Evaluating Systems Change: At a Glance

## SYSTEMS CHANGE ADDRESSES KEY AREAS

- ▶ **Context** Improving the political environment that surrounds the system
- ▶ **Components** Establishing programs and services within the system
- ▶ **Connections** Creating strong and effective links across system components
- ▶ **Infrastructure** Developing the supports systems need
- ▶ **Scale** Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many people as possible

## SYSTEMS CHANGE EVALUATION ADDRESSES KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ Did the systems change intervention do what was intended?
- ▶ Did the intervention produce results?
- ▶ How did the intervention make a difference?
- ▶ Can an impact be attributed to the intervention?

### Guided by a Theory of Change

- ▶ What actions will the intervention undertake?
- ▶ How is the system expected to change as a result?
- ▶ How will the intervention help achieve intended outcomes?

## PHASES OF A SYSTEMS CHANGE EVALUATION

Orientation	Planning	Data Collection Instruments	Baseline Data Collection	Follow-up Data Collection	Change: Baseline to Follow-up	Analyze Intervention's Contribution
Learn about the planned system change and its context.	Identify research questions and develop data collection plan.	Develop data collection instruments.	Collect data on institutional structure, current programs, and services.	Collect follow-up data and perceptions of change and effectiveness.	Analyze data to determine the extent to which changes have taken place.	Use the theory of change as a guide to assess how the intervention contributed to the changes achieved.

## QUICK TIPS

- ▶ Involve evaluators early in discussions about systems and organizational change efforts.
- ▶ Engage stakeholders in evaluation planning to help gain buy-in for the evaluation.
- ▶ Clearly define the scope and boundaries of the evaluation.
- ▶ Clarify what outcomes can and cannot be expected at which points in the initiative's implementation.
- ▶ Develop benchmarks to document incremental progress toward systems change.
- ▶ Ensure the evaluation serves the needs of child welfare practitioners and advances knowledge for the field.

**For more information and resources, see *Evaluating Systems and Organizational Change in Child Welfare Settings*, available from the Children's Bureau at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/capacity/program-evaluation>.**

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