

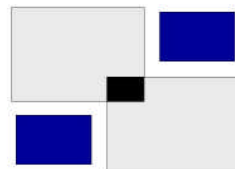
ZERO TO THREE SECONDARY PREVENTION INITIATIVE

PROGRAM INDICATORS

Steering Committee Response to Grantee Comments

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General Comments:

Thanks to everyone who submitted comments on the draft Zero to Three Secondary Prevention Initiative Program Indicators. Your thoughts and comments are useful, and are appreciated as the evaluation of the Initiative continually evolves. This document is to serve as the Steering Committee’s response to the comments and to outline the final program indicators. The responses will take a question and answer format, but will be delineated by the separate evaluation focus areas for which the comments were received.

Question: How were the percentages developed for each indicator? Where did the numbers come from?

Answer: These percentages were generated based on previous Initiative data, research findings, and other informed methods, such as statewide databases. The Steering Committee feels that, in general, the numbers are achievable, while understanding that the percentages may not be achieved in the first year. The population served is at-risk; however, the desire must be to attain increased levels of results. While these goals are established for the intermediate future of the program; your data will inform future decisions on goals for the indicators (i.e. you will tell us what we should do, based on your data).

The data sources used in developing the numerical goals are:

- Previous Zero to Three Quarterly Data as reported by Grantees
- AAPI-2 Pilot Results
- State Social Indicators and Trend Data
- Grant Agreements between CTF and the Grantees

Question: With the breadth of indicators, how will grantees collect all of this information?

Answer: Please remember that the indicators, with the exception of three, are assessing information currently collected by the grantees. All quarterly reporting data, AAPI-2 data, and grant information is continually collected. The new legislative requirements are the Promotion of Marriage (pg 4 of 12), as well as two indicators in the Support Healthy Family Environments that Discourage Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use Focus Area (pg 12 of 12). Previously, no specific

data was collected for either of these focus areas, therefore indicators had to be created in order to report back to the State Legislature and develop uniform statewide data.

The grantees are expected to continue to collect and report quarterly data on the Program Register. The AAPI-2 data is compiled and analyzed by the evaluator, Gillespie Research, LLC. The sum of the indicators will also be synthesized by Gillespie Research, LLC. In addition, Michael Gillespie of Gillespie Research, LLC and your grant monitors are available to assist you with any technical assistance you may need.

Promotion of Marriage

Question: I have reservations about the Promotion of Marriage. Would Zero to Three be better served by assessing healthy relationships or domestic violence?

Answer: It is legislated by the State of Michigan, who funds the Zero to Three Secondary Prevention Initiative that a focus should be to promote marriage. Exact legislative language is below: *1979 PA 94; State School Aid Act of 1979, as amended and passed June 9, 2004, "...for grants for the community-based collaborative prevention services designed to promote marriage and foster positive parenting skills, improve parent/child interaction, especially for children 0-3 years of age; promote access to needed community services; increase local capacity to serve families at-risk; improve school readiness; and support healthy family environments that discourage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use."*

While it is therefore noted the concerns of respondents, the legislation language is unamendable. The Steering Committee shares the concerns of both healthy relationships vs. promoting marriage, as well as concerns with domestic violence. However, we must respond to the legislation. Please refer to the definition generated for the Promotion of Marriage Focus Area that includes the support of healthy relationships for child well-being through strengthened parenting skills, effective communication and problem solving, father involvement, and prevention of domestic violence.

Question: Will there be training on the Promotion of Marriage Focus Area? What information will be provided?

Answer: CTF will be offering training around the State for grantees on promotion of marriage information through the "Caring for My Family" curriculum. Please contact Jeffery Sadler for dates and times if you have not already done so.

Please direct your Internet browser to <http://www.fcs.msue.msu.edu/cfmf/> for more information on the "Caring for My Family" curriculum.

CTF intends on informing the grantees of other opportunities for training and resources on this new focus area as they become available.

Foster Positive Parenting Skills

Question: Can the AAPI-2 be used if my program is not using the Nurturing Parenting Programs?

Answer: The focus area primarily uses the data compiled through the AAPI-2 Evaluation, with some data coming from quarterly reports from grantees. The AAPI-2 is **not** a tool developed and used primarily for the Nurturing Parenting Programs. While much of the research and background for the AAPI and the Nurturing Programs was completed at the same time, the Nurturing Curricula were born out of the results of research using the AAPI, and have their own series of evaluation tools. The AAPI-2 was developed to assess the general population, not those strictly in Nurturing Parenting Programs. Certainly the two items correspond because they come from the same pool of research, but the AAPI can be used exclusive of the Nurturing Programs.

For more information on the AAPI-2 and/or the Nurturing Programs, visit <http://www.nurturingparenting.com/>

Question: What specific strategies and inputs are expected to positively impact the indicators?

Answer: This response is as varied as our programs. The programs funded by the Zero to Three Secondary Prevention Initiative are expected to positively impact the indicators, not just for this focus area, but across all the indicators. Funding is awarded to the programs that align with the intentions of the legislation, and are therefore aligned with the evaluation focus areas, outcomes, and indicators.

Question: Is it reasonable to expect an increase in at-risk parenting attitudes to normal, positive, sustainable levels?

Answer: Primarily, the question focuses on the dropping of scores from normal levels to at-risk after a previous administration has indicated the participant as “normal”. It is understood that the first administration in a series of pre- and post-test administrations can produce a degree of false positives, as participants have not yet developed a relationship of trust with the home visitor. It is still expected that a minimal proportion of participants will fall into this category, based on data collected during the AAPI-2 Pilot. Additionally, if participants are falling to “at-risk” levels after the

initial administration indicated them as normal, it is the opinion of the Steering Committee that these persons should receive intensive interventions and services, which should aid in their scores returning and maintaining a normal level.

It is our plan to develop a “toolbox” of best practices for the various constructs. This information will come from you as we discover your best practices.

Question: Is it effective to have parents rate their own parenting skills?

Answer: For indicator #4 for the outcome *Increase at-risk parenting attitudes to normal, positive, sustainable levels*, comments surrounded the continual increase in how parents rate their parenting skills. This is noted and the indicator should measure whether the self-report is increased or maintained; certainly this will fully address the true focus of the parent’s perception of their skills as not decreasing. This indicator will be amended.

Further, there was some concern regarding the use of self-report data as a measure of parenting skills. Self-report data is useful when there is another measure against which the data can be compared. In this case, the self-reported parenting skills of participants can be compared with the findings of the AAPI-2 itself. Indeed, in the end it is the parent themselves who are responsible for their attitude and behaviors. This is one attempt to assist parents in a self-discovery process. The information is ultimately for them and not us.

Question: Is it realistic to think that for families who initially score high on the AAPI-2, to be able to meet the criteria to increase their scores? Should we measure an increase or maintenance of scores across the AAPI-2 Indicators in the Foster Positive Parenting Skills Focus Area?

Answer: Again, the Steering Committee acknowledges the phenomena of false positives, and that scores may vary from the initial assessment. Further, the Steering Committee understands that some participants will continually score high. However, there are also families that will continually score low. It is the interest of the Steering Committee to keep these indicators as they are, and re-evaluate them after a year to see if changes are needed.

Question: How can we be held accountable for families entering our services and whether they previously received parenting education and family support services?

Answer: In this case, it is the interest of the Steering Committee to track who Zero to Three Secondary Prevention Grantees are serving, not as a function of accountability of the grantees, but as a function to track what Michigan is doing for families. Grantees can not control the service histories of participants, but the larger system, both the Statewide Zero to Three Initiative as well as the larger birth to five communities, can benefit from such information.

Improved Parent/Child Interactions

Question: Is it feasible to use parent reporting to assess the quality of interactions with their children? Should an objective measure be used?

Answer: The AAPI-2 objectively measures parenting attitudes, and has been statistically proven to discriminate whether respondents are at-risk of maltreatment. Complimentary to these scores, it is an interesting evaluative question to know how parents rate the quality of relationships with their children. For example, those parents who rate the quality of relationship as ‘very good’ and score in the normal range on the Oppressing Children’s Power Construct (E) says something totally different than if the participant reported a good relationship with their children and scored low.

Hence, it should be noted that such indicators are used in collaboration with other indicators. Some of them inform the evaluation and help in a broader understanding of who we are serving and their risk factors. There may be suggestions for additional methods that assist parents to concretely measure their interactions; a few of these tools are being utilized by some of the grantees and may emerge as effective strategies as we progress.

Question: Is it realistic to set a goal of 95% of participants to increase the quality of relationships with their children?

Answer: The indicator looks at the ratings from the pre-test to the final administration of the AAPI-2, essentially at exiting from services. The Steering Committee does not think it is unreasonable to expect 95% of participants to increase, but are willing to re-evaluate this indicator when more AAPI-2 data is submitted.

Question: Attrition rates are high; how can we be expected to maintain or increase the percentage of families who remain in service?

Answer: While understanding that attrition is inevitable, it is in the interest of the Steering Committee to maintain high levels of service for families. The Steering Committee is therefore interested in helping grantees with attrition issues and would like to receive ideas and feedback for training and

technical assistance needed regarding retention of participants. Please contact Jeffery Sadler with any comments or feedback.

Question: Should Category 3 CPS Dispositions be included in measures of abuse and/or neglect substantiations?

Answer: This issue is one that the Steering Committee has been considering for some time. The problem lies in an issue of legislative versus Children's Protective Services (CPS) policy language. The Enabling Zero to Three legislation states that services should not be provided to families *substantiated* of abuse or neglect; however as of July 1, 1999, Michigan's Child Protection Law instituted 5 disposition categories for CPS investigations, effectively removing the word "substantiation". Instead, the phrase "preponderance of evidence" is used to show evidence of abuse or neglect and an index of risk through a structured decision-making model.

Category 1 and 2 Dispositions show the risk as being high or intensive and mandate protective services through CPS; Category 1 is an automatic petition for court action. Category 3 has a risk factor of low or moderate and mandates referrals to community-based services commensurate with the risk to the child. Under this category, a parent is not listed on the CPS Central Registry for abuse or neglect. Therefore, it is the decision of the Steering Committee to remove Category 3 Dispositions from measures of corroborated abuse and/or neglect. A memo will be distributed after the grants are awarded to inform the sites.

Therefore, new indicators will be provided to measure Category 1 and 2 Dispositions only; three new indicators will be created to track those families served with Category 3 Dispositions as well, under the awareness that this category indicates the family is at-risk, but not eligible for protective service through CPS.

Question: How will CPS Data be collected and reported?

Answer: Grantees are responsible to provide a list of children served in the fiscal (grant) year on the 3-1b form with their fourth quarter reports. *This report includes the name of the child.* These reports are used in conjunction with CPS Centralized Data Systems to determine levels of CPS involvement

of Zero to Three Participants. It is noteworthy to remind grantees that all names are confidential and are not used in reporting this data. All numbers and percentages reported are aggregated within each grantee and across the entire system. All efforts to protect the anonymity of participants will be exhausted including the destroying of documents with identifying information.

Promote Access to Needed Community Services

Question: Should we only be considering newly enrolled children since developmental delays would have already identified at the original screening and referred to appropriate services?

Answer: This indicator measures the number of children who were screened in each quarter and found to have delays as being referred to appropriate programs. Since developmental delays are not always immediately evident (not at birth or one year of age, and so forth) the on-going assessment of a child’s development is warranted. Only screening newly-enrolled children for their development may miss problems that can arise 6 months, one year, or later down the road.

Improve School Readiness

Question: What is the definition of school readiness? Since Zero to Three only covers ages birth through three, is it really improving school readiness?

Answer: School readiness does not begin at the time a child enters pre-school or kindergarten. Life experiences from birth through age three and to school entry impact school readiness as much as emerging academic skill. For example, the text of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* addresses this issue by stating:
Early interventions are premised on a belief in the power of environmental influences on early development. Our review of the research on early development in areas as disparate as behavior genetics, neurobiology, and social and cognitive development has supported this belief...The environment provided by the child’s first caregivers has profound effects on virtually every facet of early development, ranging from the health and integrity of the baby at birth to the child’s readiness to start school at age 5¹.

Therefore, it is the opinion of the Steering Committee, in line with the breadth of research, that the concepts underlying Zero to Three Secondary Prevention are the foundation for school readiness.

Question: Should indicators be added to measure parent’s involvement and their assistance in improving school readiness for their child?

Answer: In theory, all of the indicators that measure some aspect of parental behaviors, actions, or understanding should impact the school readiness of the child. Further, since one interest in creating these indicators was to minimize new points for data collection, other measures of parental involvement in school readiness, such as reading time with children or other educational experiences, would mean the creation of other data collect measures and indicators not currently collected within Zero to Three. If your program is targeting this outcome, feel free to collect unique data and report it to us in your year-end evaluation.

¹ Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Question: Is 80% too high for the immunization rate? Does the MCIR² accurately measure this rate?

Answer: According to the National Immunization Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, the State of Michigan Immunization Level in 2002 for children ages 19 to 35 months was 84.3% for 4.3.1 immunizations and 81.6% for 4.3.1.3.3 immunizations. Further, the national Kids Count Data Book for 2005 states the immunization rate for Michigan in 2003 is 83%. With this data, the Steering Committee decided to set the Zero to Three goal to be 80%.

The Steering Committee understands the limitations of the MCIR; however without adding another data collection instrument, it can be most useful to use existing data sources, while acknowledging their limitations. Reasonable efforts should be taken to use the MCIR for reporting on this indicator; if the MCIR is unavailable then other data sources could be used, such as using a parent self report. Yet other means will raise limitations as well.

Question: Parental understanding of child development and certain assessment tools will impact the development of their children. How will this be measured and taken in to account?

Answer: Indicator #1 within the outcome of ‘Improve parent’s understanding of child development’ in the Foster Positive Parenting Skills Focus Area measures the understanding of child development by the parents. It uses the first construct in the AAPI-2 as a measure of appropriate expectations of their child.

Without adding more measures, indicators, or other data collection tools that are not currently used or collected, this is the closest we can get to assessing parental ‘understanding’.

² MCIR refers to the Michigan Childhood Immunization Record, a statewide system used to manage immunization records.

Question: Should an indicator be added to measure understanding by parents of child development?

Answer: See the answer for the preceding question.

Increase Local Capacity to Serve Families At-Risk

No comments

Support Healthy Family Environments that Discourage Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use

Question: Where did these indicators come from? Will we be provided with best-practice programs and/or create a list of recommended resources for programs?

Answer: The focus area of Supporting Healthy Family Environments that Discourage Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use has been in the legislative language for some time, but the Initiative has never measured any indicators on this area. In creating the Indicators document, the Steering Committee needed to add an indicator or two to prove our focus on these issues and provide data on the outcomes. The indicators were suggested by the Department of Public Health at the Michigan Department of Community Health.

The Steering Committee would be interested in receiving feedback and resources on potential best-practices and information to addresses these indicators. Grantees can forward ideas and suggestions to Jeffery Sadler, CTF Grant Monitor.

Other Indicators Relevant from the Early Childhood Comprehensive System

The other indicators listed on page 10 of 10 of the Draft were provided from the ECCS work as examples of other indicators that could be measured locally. The Steering Committee will not require the collection of data for any of the listed indicators and the list will be removed from the final indicator document.