

Monday, June 12, 2023

Rigorous Evaluation in Child Welfare: Presentation for Evidence- Building and Adoption Briefing

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Agenda

I. Background & Disclaimers

II. Five Important Evaluation Topics and Concepts

1. Program Logic Models
2. A Clearly Defined Program
3. Readiness for Summative (Impact) Evaluation
4. Leveraging Existing Administrative Data
5. Finding/Partnering with Evaluators

III. Guidance Materials and Resources

Background & Disclaimers

- Urban Institute (Urban) is a non-profit economic and social policy research organization based in Washington, DC.
- Urban has 12 different policy centers
- We conduct studies throughout the country
- Urban's child welfare team has been evaluating child welfare programs and services and conducting RCTs for over 2 decades

Disclaimers

- No association with the NOFO
- Interpretations of NOFO are my own
- No association with the Prevention Services Clearinghouse
- Not speaking on behalf of OPRE
- Not speaking on behalf of an OPRE project

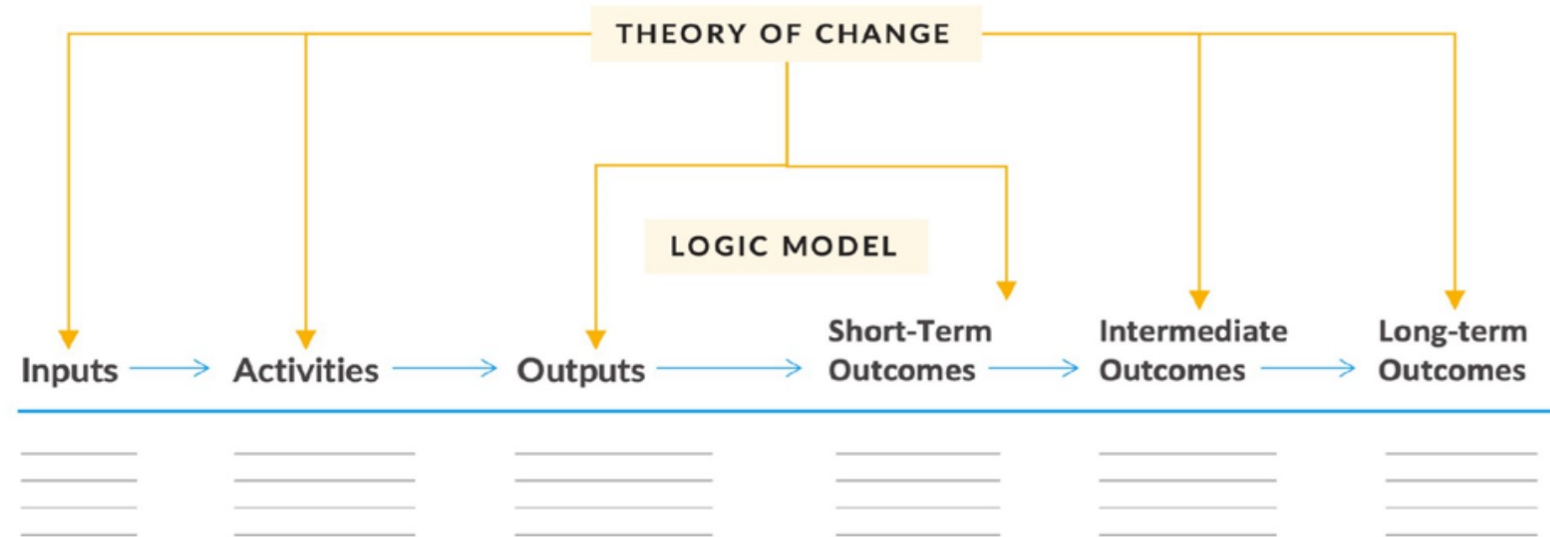
Program Logic Models

NOFO: “Include a **logic model** that clearly operationalizes the project’s stated theory of change and illustrates the linkages between project activities/services, outputs, and expected outcomes.”

Prendergast and Malm. 2022. *How to Develop a Theory of Change and Logic Model for Your Kinship Navigator Program*
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/how-develop-theory-change-and-logic-model-your-kinship-navigator-program>

FIGURE 2

Transforming the Theory of Change into a Logic Model



Source: Author’s representation of how a theory of change connects to the creation of a logic model.

Clearly Defined Program

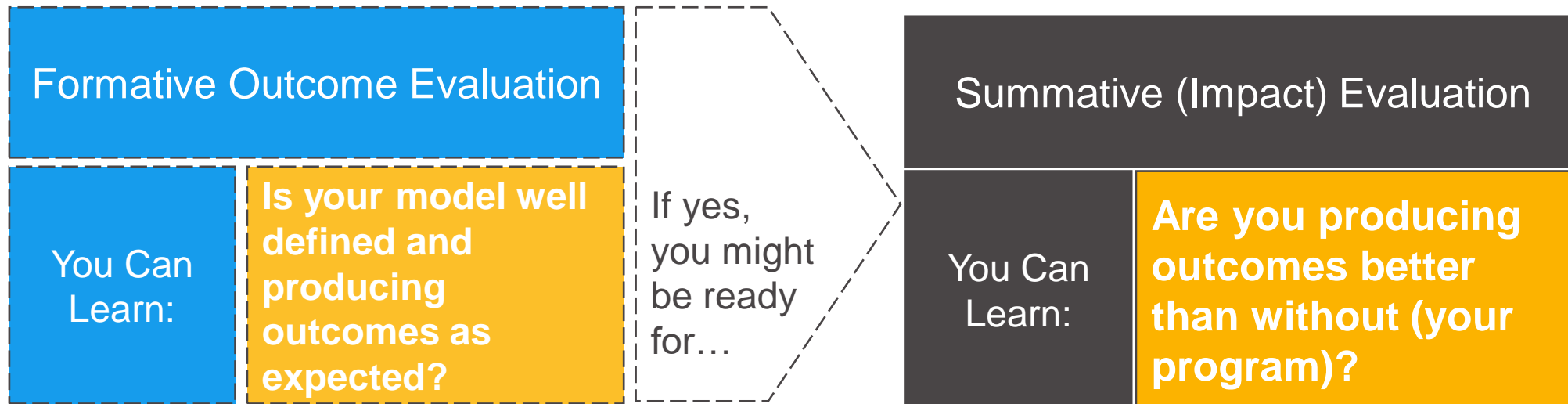
NOFO: “... a program/service must: Be clearly defined and replicable. To meet this criterion, programs and services must have available written protocols, manuals, or other documentation that describes how to implement or administer the practice.”

Some example why's.....

- Thinking ahead to the future: *When you've demonstrated your program works, how can you ensure others will do it correctly?*
- Thinking about adaptations: *Helps with understanding what and how might need adapting to fit different contexts.*

Readiness for (Impact) Evaluation

NOFO: “Applicants must demonstrate that programs and services proposed for evaluation are ready for rigorous summative evaluations, for example by describing formative evaluations that have already been completed.”



Readiness for (Impact) Evaluation

NOFO: “Grant recipients are expected to conduct a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental design that aligns with the most current version of the Clearinghouse Design and Execution Standards for Moderate or High Support of Causal Evidence.”



*We recommend

Randomized
Controlled Trial

Quasi-
Experimental
Design

Readiness for (Impact) Evaluation

From Title IV-E Prevention Services Handbook

Exhibit 5.2. Ratings Flowchart for Contrasts from Randomized Controlled Trials

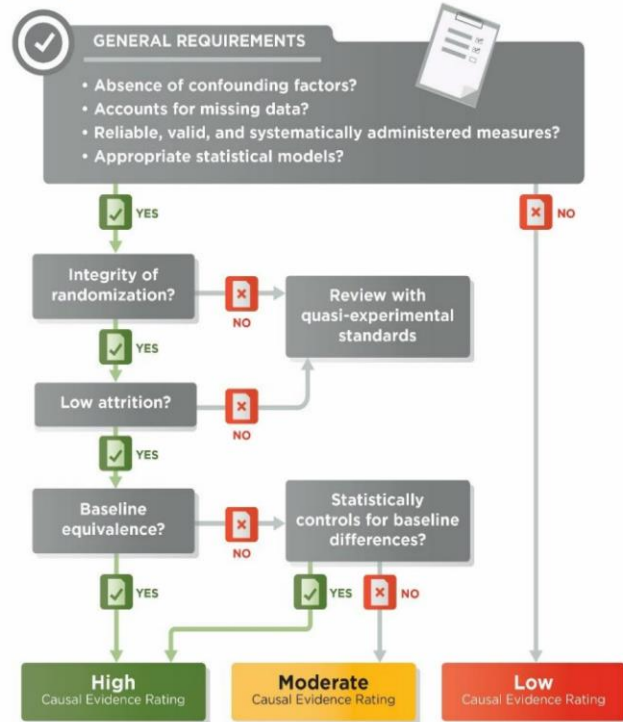
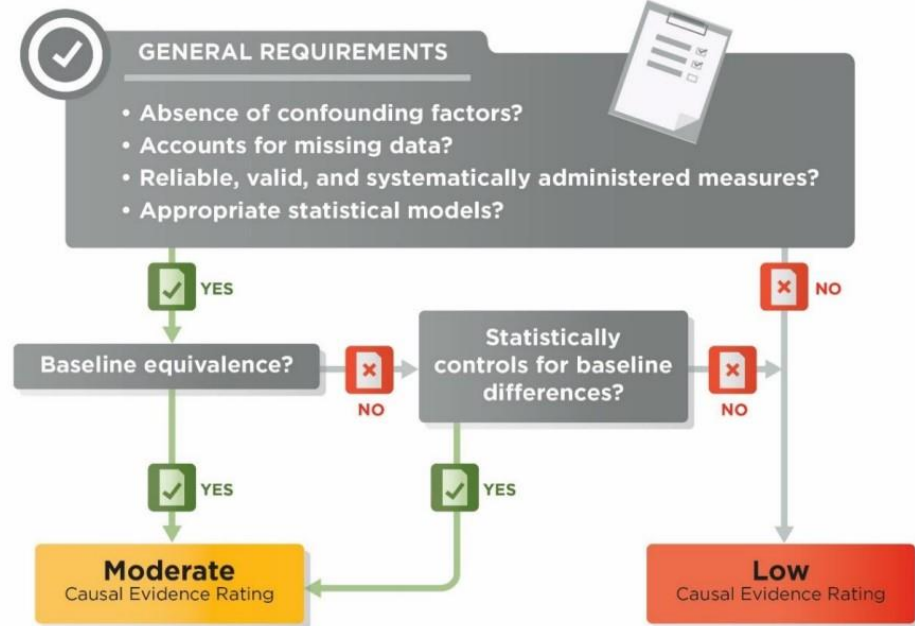


Exhibit 5.5. Ratings Flowchart for Quasi-experimental Design Studies



https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/themes/ffc_theme/pdf/psc_handbook_v1_final_508_compliant.pdf

Leveraging Existing Administrative Data

NOFO: *“ACF is particularly interested in evaluations that leverage existing administrative data.”*

Some example why's.....

- **Time:** data already exist; faster than primary data collection (typically)
- **Cost:** less expensive than survey or assessments (typically)
- **Outcomes:** available for both treatment and comparison groups

Finding / Partnering with Evaluators

Look for.....

- Someone independent of the program
- Someone with experience doing impact evaluations
- Someone who understands the child welfare context

Select Guidance Materials and Resources

- Performance Measurement to Evaluation for Nonprofits
 - <https://www.urban.org/measure4change-performance-measurement-playbook>
 - https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/78571/2000555-performance-measurement-to-evaluation-march-2016-update_2.pdf
- Collection of Instructional Resources for Child Welfare Evaluation
<https://www.urban.org/projects/roadmaps-building-child-welfare-evidence>
 - Key design elements for rigorous impact evaluations in children welfare
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/ten-key-design-elements-rigorous-impact-evaluations-child-welfare>
 - Conducting randomized controlled trial (RCT) in child welfare
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/conducting-randomized-controlled-trial-rct-child-welfare>
 - Quasi-experimental designs in child welfare evaluations
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/quasi-experimental-designs-child-welfare-evaluations>
 - Administrative data in child welfare evaluations
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/administrative-data-child-welfare-evaluations>
- Quasi-Experimental Design and Methods <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/753-quasi-experimental-design-and-methods-methodological-briefs-impact-evaluation-no.html>

Thank you!

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