



British Columbia Early Childhood Development Evaluation Project

The Parent Survey

A system to measure the impact of Family Education and Support Programs in BC

Background

Over the years, we have heard from program providers that they are constantly being asked to provide evidence that their programs are making a difference to the people they are intended to serve. Measuring outputs (e.g. number of parents that attend, number of sessions offered) is relatively easy, while determining the right outcomes to measure and how to measure them is more difficult. Similarly, funders must demonstrate that investments are having impact.

A group of funders and community agencies have been working together since 2005 to develop a coordinated evaluation system for early childhood development, which includes the ability to measure the impact of programs designed to educate and support parents of young children.

The system has two key features:

1. A Parent Survey that can be used with a wide range of parent education and support programs.
2. Technology to input data and produce reports - anytime throughout the year that fits with program schedules.



Advantages of the Parent Survey

User Friendly

- ✓ The system utilizes a relatively short, easy to complete Parent Survey (Available in 10 languages - English, French, Arabic, Chinese (traditional & simplified), Farsi, Korean, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese. More will be added as needed.)

Flexible for Different Uses

- ✓ The Parent Survey can be used as a pre and post-test for time-limited programs – or to compare outcomes for program participants who have attended a program a few times vs. many times.

It Measures what Matters

- ✓ The survey provides reliable and valid measures of family-centered practice and parenting ability, which research has shown can impact child and family outcomes.

It's Free

- ✓ Use of the system is free to BC ECD program providers

It works!

- ✓ Pilot testing of the parent survey has shown that programs can use the results for program improvement.

What the parent survey measures

The majority of the Parent Survey questions were developed over 15 years by researcher Dr. Carl Dunst and his colleagues. The Survey includes:

1. Reliable and valid measures of three components of parenting ability:
 - ✓ parenting competence,
 - ✓ parenting confidence and
 - ✓ parenting enjoyment.
2. Reliable and valid measures of the essential elements of family-centered help giving practices.
3. Questions about parent perceptions of how their involvement in a program has made a difference in their lives and the lives of their children.
4. Questions related to parent's perceptions of increases in social support.

The Parent Survey & technology will be available in 2013. To receive updates, please register at:

bcecd.fluidsurveys.com/s/upd/

About The BC Early Childhood Development Evaluation project

The BC ECD Evaluation Project was initiated by Success By 6 in 2005, with funding support from the Max Bell Foundation and in collaboration with the BC ECD Funders Network. The main goals of the project were to identify common outcomes and frameworks that could be used to evaluate early childhood initiatives.

Following research and consultation, a vision and four long term outcomes were identified:

Vision: Children are healthy and develop to their full potential.

Outcomes:

1. Mothers are healthy and give birth to healthy infants who remain healthy.
2. Children experience healthy early child development, including optimal early learning and care.
3. Parents are empowered to nurture and care for their children,
4. Communities support the development of all children and families.

Evaluation tools to measure outcome 4, specifically work being done by local ECD tables, Success By 6 and Children First, have now been implemented province-wide. More information on this phase of the project (including project reports) can be found at www.successby6.ca/early-childhood-development

The project team is now preparing to implement use of the Parent Survey, which measures progress towards Outcome 3.

Participants in the BC Early Childhood Development Evaluation Project for the Parent Survey are:

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Public Health Agency of Canada
Human Early Learning Partnership,
Success By 6
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Family Resource Programs of BC
BC Council for Families
Aboriginal Head Start Assn. of BC
The Federation of Community Social Services of BC

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