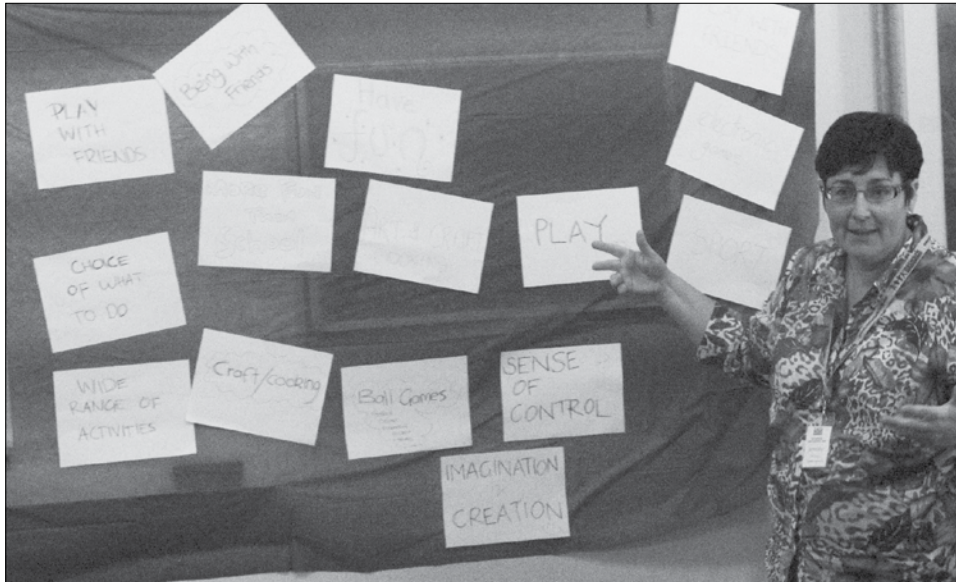




## Evaluation



- ★ Helps eliminate repetition in the centre's program
- ★ Helps build a resource file for successful and popular crafts, games and activities
- ★ Helps staff improve or discard crafts, games and activities that were not successful and why they failed
- ★ Allows for dissatisfactions to be aired
- ★ Lets new and relief staff know what has been done in the past programs
- ★ Is a quick resource file for ideas when developing the program

Evaluation is a process of collecting information and making judgments about how the centre is currently operating and it is used to help guide decisions for future planning. It is an integral part of planning and is the key to continuous improvement in outside school hours care services. The process of evaluation will be enhanced if it involves contributions from all stakeholders (children, families, staff and management) and if staff can openly reflect on their practice, have a positive attitude to change and accept diverse points of view.

Evaluation not only allows for staff and committee members to measure their success, but it also helps in developing future evaluations. This process should not be something that is only done at the end of a term or when a problem arises, but as an ongoing process throughout the life of the centre.

### EVALUATION – WHY?

The major goal of evaluation should be to influence decision-making or policy formulation through the provision of practical, realistic feedback.

#### **Evaluation:**

- ★ Helps you see where you are now, where you have been and how well you have met your goals and objectives

- ★ Gives a written overview of what has happened in the centre and where the centre is headed

### EVALUATION SHOULD BE:

- ★ Motivated by a genuine desire to improve all aspects of the centre's operation
- ★ Unbiased and independent - not carried out with the intention of proving a point or discrediting someone
- ★ An ongoing process and part of the regular meetings and routines throughout the year

### WHAT TO EVALUATE:

Areas needing to be evaluated may be determined by the time of year, areas requiring immediate improvement, or specific issues needing to be addressed. Ideally everything will eventually be evaluated. The following are some areas you may wish to evaluate:

- ★ Centre's policies, aims and objectives – are they relevant? How do you know?
- ★ Roles and responsibilities – management and staff

- ★ Program of activities – what works, what doesn't? Do you know why?
- ★ Family information documents – are they effective? Do they need updating?
- ★ Space – is it adequate? Could it be used better? What are the restrictions?
- ★ Activities, games, craft used – are they age, ability and gender appropriate?
- ★ Children's enthusiasm and level of participation – how do they participate? Why don't they participate?
- ★ Materials and resources – are they adequate? Are they in good repair?
- ★ Safety – how and when is this monitored?
- ★ Staff team performance and professional development – how and when is this reviewed?
- ★ Quality of care – how is this determined?

#### ■ HOW TO EVALUATE

There are many different methods of gathering information for evaluation purposes. You may want to target one or more areas depending on what kind of information you want. Some examples are:

- ★ Observing what's happening in your centre
- ★ Discussions with staff and asking what they like or dislike at the centre and in the programme
- ★ Discussions with children and asking them individually what they like at the centre/ programme
- ★ Survey for families and children to complete and return to the centre
- ★ Discussion with the management committee members.

To gather information effectively you need to ask the right questions. Questions that are open-ended are the best because they give the person responding the opportunity to say why/how, etc. rather than merely answering yes or no. For example, you could ask the children "What is your favourite thing to do while you are at OOSH and why is it your favourite thing" - rather than - "Do you like the activities at OOSH".

#### ■ FINALISING THE EVALUATION:

Once you have gathered the information, you will need to decide what to do with the information. The usual procedure is to consider all of the responses, either written or verbal and then:

- ★ List what is working well and things that need changing
- ★ Discuss and agree on the changes/ improvements to be made
- ★ Decide on strategies to make the changes/ improvements
- ★ Develop a method for implementation for the strategies
- ★ Agree on who will be responsible for the implementation
- ★ Decide on a timeline for when the changes/ improvements will be made
- ★ Follow through to ensure that the changes/ improvements are being implemented
- ★ Monitor to see if the changes/improvements are working

And of course... start all over again!

#### ■ OTHER RELEVANT OOSH DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEETS:

- ★ Program Planning #13
- ★ Family Involvement #14



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