

MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CENTERS/MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY NETWORKS  
PEER REVIEW PROCESS  
PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Adapted from:

1. Family Resource Center Self-Assessment Tool (California)
2. Self-Assessment Tool: Peer Review Training for Community Based Services" - Draft (California)
3. How Are We Doing? Self-Assessment Toolkit (Family Support America)

Sections:

- A. Parent Involvement and Leadership
- B. Cooperation and Community Involvement
- C. Building Families' Strengths and Parent-to-Parent Support
- D. Program Administration and Staff Development
- E. Cultural Sensitivity
- F. Program Activities and Services
- G. Governance
- H. Outreach/Engaging Families
- I. Center Environment
- J. Program Evaluation
- K. Summary Sheet

A. Parent Involvement and Leadership

Parent Involvement and Leadership	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples to Consider
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Program recognizes and respects the expertise of families as policy and program advisors.							
2. Program utilizes a variety of strategies to identify and recruit families to participate in leadership and advisory roles.							
3. Program has developed a range of ways for families to participate as leaders and advisors.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning/facilitating activities.</li> <li>▪ Participating as trainers in staff orientation and in-service programs</li> <li>▪ Reviewing written and audiovisual materials</li> <li>▪ Being involved in evaluation activities</li> <li>▪ Participating in focus groups</li> <li>▪ Serving as members of committees, boards, and task forces</li> <li>▪ Reviewing grants</li> <li>▪ Developing educational and informational materials for other families</li> <li>▪ Conducting needs assessment</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> <li>▪ _____</li> </ul>
4. Parents are active members of governing/advisory councils. (Please provide a brief description of the governing/advisory council in the "Comments and Evidence" box)							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents comprise a significant portion of governing/advisory councils</li> <li>▪ Parent membership on the council reflects the diversity of the families served by the program</li> <li>▪ Parents have a leadership role in governing/advisory councils</li> <li>▪ Program has a parent advisory council or committee.</li> </ul>

Parent Involvement and Leadership	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples to Consider
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
5. The program supports, respects and values parent involvement and leadership roles.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reimbursing travel expenses or providing transportation</li> <li>▪ Providing childcare on site or reimbursing childcare expenses</li> <li>▪ Offering a stipend or honorarium for their participation</li> <li>▪ Providing seasoned parents to serve as mentors for parents new to the program</li> <li>▪ Offering training programs and workshops that will enhance parents' capacities as advisors</li> <li>▪ Facilitating their networking with other families and community groups</li> <li>▪ Being aware of parental burn-out and/or over involvement with the program</li> <li>▪ Providing ongoing recognition and acknowledgement for parents who have committed their time</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> <li>▪ _____</li> </ul>
6. Program provides support to staff on working collaboratively with families at the policy and program level.							
7. Parent input and feedback is valued and respected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parent input and feedback informs program activities and services</li> <li>b. Parents are involved in program evaluation activities, which informs program development and improves service delivery</li> </ul>							

Parent Involvement and Leadership	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples to Consider
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
8. Parents are involved as volunteers in the program.							
9. Parents are supported in participation through the provision of: a. Childcare b. Transportation, as needed c. Meals during program activities d. Other (please specify) _____							
10. Programs and activities are geared towards both mothers and fathers and respective of diverse family structures.							
11. Parents are supported in participating and contributing to the program and/or the community.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conducting outreach to other families.</li> <li>▪ Assessing community needs and resources</li> <li>▪ Organizing events</li> <li>▪ Leading support groups/workshops</li> <li>▪ Mentoring other parents</li> <li>▪ Publicizing events and services.</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> <li>▪ _____</li> </ul>
12. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

B. Cooperation and Community Involvement

Cooperation and Community Involvement	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Programs facilitate a sense of belonging and connection to the community* among program participants. (*As defined by the program - please provide a brief description in "Comments and Evidence")							
2. The community demonstrates its support of the program.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial support</li> <li>▪ In-kind support (donations or volunteer hours)</li> <li>▪ Referrals for services</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> <li>▪ _____</li> </ul>
3. The program engages all sectors of the community and is visible in the community.							E.g. Religious organizations, businesses, local police, etc.
4. Diverse community partners are represented on governing/advisory councils.							
5. The program has identified other community resources and develops effective working relationships with those resources.							

Cooperation and Community Involvement	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
6. The program engages in both formal and informal cooperative activities and builds collaborative relationships with other community agencies/service providers and other local partners (e.g. local businesses, religious organizations, etc.).							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sharing resources</li> <li>▪ Referrals</li> <li>▪ Identifying and addressing gaps in service delivery through collaborations</li> <li>▪ Ensuring non-duplication of services</li> </ul>
7. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

C. Building Families' Strengths and Parent-to-Parent Support

Building Families' Strengths & Parent-to-Parent Support	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Program assists family members in identifying their strengths, competencies, and past successes.							
2. Program creates opportunities for families to gain information and learn new life skills.							
3. The program nurtures parent-to-parent support: a. Parents serve as resources and mentors to other parents b. Program helps identify and connect families with formal and informal supports							
4. Parents are encouraged to contribute their talents and expertise to programs and services							
5. Program helps family members identify sources of stress in their lives and develop ways to relieve or reduce that stress.							
6. Program works with families to set goals as they seek to make changes in their life situations.							
7. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

D. Program Administration and Staff Development<sup>1</sup>

Program Administration and Staff Development	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Staff are aware of and committed to the mission and vision of the program.							
2. Hiring practices and support provided to staff are sensitive to the diversity of the community served.							
3. Staff are qualified to do the tasks required of them.							
4. Staff are trained in the principles of family support and practice strength-based approaches to supporting families.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working with families as equal partners in service delivery decisions</li> <li>▪ Assisting families in identifying and building on strengths and capacities</li> <li>▪ Understanding the culture, context and values of the families in the community</li> <li>▪ Respecting each family's uniqueness; and the pace at which they handle issues</li> <li>▪ Confidentiality between families and staff is respected</li> </ul>
5. There is adequate staffing for the range of activities offered by the program.							

<sup>1</sup> Some family centers/networks may contract with consultants/educators for some services, rather than employing direct staff. In these cases, please use those contractors as the basis when assessing this section. Please also indicate those components that are not applicable to the program and further explain why in the "comments and evidence" column.

Program Administration and Staff Development	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
6. Staff are provided with professional development and training opportunities that are relevant/necessary for their work.							
7. All staff receive an adequate amount of supervision, based on their particular duties and their level of experience.							
8. Job performance reviews are conducted regularly							
9. Program staff model the principles of family support.							
10. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

E. Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural Sensitivity	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. The diversity of the community served (e.g. racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, family structure, etc.) is reflected in all aspects of the program.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Governing/ Advisory council membership.</li> <li>▪ Outreach materials</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Program activities and services</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> <li>▪ _____</li> </ul>
2. All staff receive on-going training in cultural diversity and sensitivity							
3. The program has the capacity to provide services in the primary languages of the families receiving services or has translation/interpretation services available.							
4. Outreach materials and brochures are available in the languages and at the appropriate literacy level of the community served							
5. Program respects the range of different parenting styles of the families served and is not prescriptive.							

Cultural Sensitivity	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
6. The program facility reflects positive images of different family structures and cultural, ethnic, and racial groups and does not portray anyone negatively.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Artwork and photographs throughout the facility portray diverse racial groups and cultures</li> <li>▪ Resource materials for parents are geared to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community</li> <li>▪ Children’s toys and games reflect the diversity of the community (consider removing this e.g.?)</li> </ul>
7. Other (please specify) _____							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

F. Program Activities and Services

Program Activities and Services	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Program activities and services are flexible and responsive to the identified needs and interests of families.							
2. The program offers a variety of services, which are accessible to all families.							
3. Families are involved in programming decisions (i.e. decisions regarding what is offered).							
4. Activities and/or services are offered at a time and place accessible to families.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Center hours include drop-in hours</li> <li>▪ Flexible scheduling (e.g. available on some weeknights and weekend days)</li> </ul>
5. Activities and/or services are made accessible to families through the provision of child care, transportation, and food.							
6. The program provides services directly - or through links with other services - to help families meet their needs and/or address concerns and interests.							
7. The program provides information and referral services to connect families with other services in the community.							

Program Activities and Services	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
8. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

G. Governance

Governance	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. Program has a written vision/mission statement.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The written vision/mission statement is clear and understandable to all community members.</li> <li>▪ Mission statement was developed in partnership with council members</li> <li>▪ All council members are aware of and committed to the program vision/mission statement</li> <li>▪ The statement is written in the languages and literacy level of the community served and the members of the council</li> <li>▪ The statement is consistent with the principles of strength-based and family-centered services (principles of family support)</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> </ul>

Governance	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
2. Membership of the council is representative of the community served.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Culturally, racially, ethnically, socio-economically, etc. representative.</li> <li>▪ Strongly represented by local parents who are or will be consumers of the program's services</li> <li>▪ Parent participation is supported (e.g. provision of childcare, transportation, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Members are actively recruited from a representative cross-section of the community</li> <li>▪ The community's stakeholders in the program are represented on the council</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> </ul>
3. Decision-making roles of the council are clearly defined.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The decision-making process is clear and understood by all council members</li> <li>▪ The by-laws clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the council, staff and the lead agency.</li> <li>▪ Council is actively involved in Programmatic (e.g. types of activities/services provided, evaluation activities) and budgetary decisions</li> <li>▪ Other (please specify)</li> </ul>

Governance	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
4. Council meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The council meets on a regular basis throughout the year, during times that are flexible and convenient for participating members</li> <li>b. Minutes of all council meetings are readily available and distributed to all members</li> <li>c. All members of the council have the opportunity to contribute to the agenda</li> <li>d. Other (please specify)</li> </ul>							
5. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

H. Outreach/Engaging Families

Outreach	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. The population for outreach is clearly defined and based on information provided by a needs assessment.							
2. The program uses a variety of outreach methods to engage families.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newsletters</li> <li>▪ Door-to-door outreach</li> <li>▪ Special events</li> <li>▪ Home visiting</li> <li>▪ Use of local media</li> <li>▪ Program parents (e.g. word-of-mouth)</li> </ul>
3. Outreach Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Outreach is conducted for all families with young children who live in the program service area</li> <li>b. Outreach is conducted in a culturally sensitive way for all families</li> <li>c. Outreach takes place on a consistent and regular basis for all families</li> </ul>							

Outreach	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
4. Outreach Materials are accessible to families in the community and provide relevant information.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Available in the languages spoken by families in the community</li> <li>▪ Consistent with the literacy levels of the families in the community</li> <li>▪ Written so that all families can easily understand the information</li> <li>▪ Reflect the cultural diversity of families</li> <li>▪ Present information on program services and activities</li> <li>▪ Available to families in the entire program service area</li> <li>▪ Available for community partners to distribute</li> <li>▪ Clearly state that program services are available to <b>all families</b> with young children within the age guideline</li> </ul>
5. Barriers to outreach are identified and strategies are developed to address them.							
6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of outreach methods takes place on a consistent and regular basis and informs and improves the way outreach is conducted.							

	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
Outreach							
7. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

I. Center Environment <sup>2</sup>

Center Environment	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples to Consider
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. The facility has a warm, welcoming, family-friendly, and supportive atmosphere.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informal conversation among parents and staff members can take place</li> <li>▪ Private conversations between staff and individual participants can occur</li> <li>▪ Parents and children can participate in activities together</li> <li>▪ Children can play in a safe, age-appropriate space</li> </ul>
2. The program/program activities are located in a place that is visible and easily accessible to community residents.							
3. The center is accessible to all families (e.g. handicapped accessible, stroller accessible)							
4. The center staff and atmosphere is welcoming and friendly to all families.							
5. Visual materials in the center, materials on the walls, toys, books, etc., are respectful of the families served.							E.g. Culture, ethnicity, language, socio-economic background
6. Center hours include drop-in hours and are flexible (open on weeknights and weekends) to accommodate working families.							

<sup>2</sup> For multi-site or non-center based family center/network programs, please consider all of the sites in which program activities/services are provided when completing this section.

	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples to Consider
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
Center Environment							
7. Other (please specify)							
Comments/Recommendations/suggestions:							

I. Program Evaluation

Program Evaluation	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
1. An annual program review process is in place.							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessment of the types of services needed by the community.</li> <li>▪ Plans for adjusting the types of services offered (e.g. new services are needed, expansion of existing services, a service is no longer wanted, a service is now provided by another agency).</li> <li>▪ Evaluation of the quality of services.</li> <li>▪ Suggestions for improving service quality.</li> <li>▪ The degree to which the service meets its goals and objectives</li> <li>▪ Adequacy of staffing ratios and job responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Consistency of expenditures with budget, contract(s) and fiscal policies</li> <li>▪ Determination of whether sufficient time and funds are allocated for evaluation work</li> <li>▪ The degree to which programming and services are consistent with the program's overall vision and mission.</li> </ul>
2. Program evaluation and review is a collaborative, ongoing process that includes feedback from staff, families, program administrators, and community members.							

Program Evaluation	How well are we doing?					Comments and Evidence	Examples for Consideration
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Applicable	In Planning Process		
3. Regular needs assessments of the community are conducted and informs program services and activities to both avoid duplication of and fill gaps in services.							
4. The program identifies and addresses barriers to participating in and accessing services.							
5. Participation satisfaction is measured for program activities and services using a variety of methods.							E.g. Program evaluations, focus groups, suggestion boxes, parent satisfaction questionnaires
6. The program addresses needs or issues identified by the annual review.							
7. Evaluation results are shared with all stakeholders in the program including parents, the governing/advisory council, staff and community collaborators.							
8. Other (please specify)							
Recommendations/suggestions:							

