



ASSESSMENT

**DEVELOPING A SHARED MEASUREMENT AND
ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE FAMILY-CENTRED
SERVICE SYSTEM APPROACH**

AUGUST 2015





INTRODUCTION

“Organizations in London are committed to working together to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The Family-Centred Service System strategy is fundamentally about strengthening children and families - about working together to build a more integrated, responsive, and effective service system that helps families and their children access the supports they need to be successful in all aspects of their lives.”

As a partner in the Province's *Community Action Research - Community Integration Leaders* initiative and with more than five years of system integration experience and four neighbourhood Family Centres established in our community, the Child and Youth Network undertook an in-depth assessment of the impact that implementing a family-centred approach has had on the service delivery system in London. Conducted in 2014, this independent assessment looked at the experiences of both families and system participants, providing strong evidence that the investment of time, energy and resources is significantly improving key outcomes for families. (For additional information on the results of this assessment, please refer to *How the Family-Centred Service System Approach is Impacting Families in London*.)

The Impact Assessment also provided the Child and Youth Network with valuable insight into the development of a permanent framework and a set of tools with which to measure the future success of the family-centred approach as it continues to evolve. The Impact Assessment broke new ground - there is no comparable integrated service system approach in the Province and therefore no one had undertaken this type of assessment before. For the most part, the entire framework for assessing the impact of an integrated family-centred model had to be built from the ground up.

The process of surveying families and service providers allowed the Child and Youth Network to refine its understanding of what data can and should be collected, what systems are required in the future to collect that data and how the assessment should be used to guide future evolution of the family-centred approach. The balance of this discussion¹ focuses on these points.

1. This discussion document is the third in a series of three that includes:

1. The Family-Centred Service System Approach and the Family-Centred Service System Theory of Change
2. How the Family-Centred Service System Approach is Impacting Families in London
3. Developing a Shared Measurement and Assessment Framework for the Family-Centred Service System

WHY A SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM?

“What gets measured gets done.”

SHARED MEASUREMENT

Robust, continuous measurement is essential in any large-scale, complex undertaking to track progress and refine the approach. When the ambition is coordinated system change across partners, jurisdictions and contexts, we can't just talk about "what" gets measured - we need to talk about "how".

The Collective Impact approach utilizes a shared measurement system as a catalyst for accelerating coordinated change. Not only does the shared measurement approach allow partners to understand the impact of their efforts in relation to the collective goal, it also encourages aligned, mutually reinforcing activities. When partners agree on how system change should be assessed and what data points are necessary to track, a common language develops and it becomes easier for organizations to align their activities. Thus, a shared measurement system both tracks and supports coordinated system change.

The 2014 FCSS Impact Assessment generated a number of recommendations related to the "what" and "how" of shared measurement for service integration based on the research and deep data generated in the field via operating Family Centres. The following sections summarize these recommendations.

THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective impact is more rigorous and specific than collaboration among organizations. There are five conditions that, together, lead to meaningful results from collective impact:

1. **Common Agenda:** All participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.
2. **Shared Measurement:** All participating organizations agree on the ways success will be measured and reported, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.
3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
4. **Continuous Communication:** All players engage in frequent and structured open communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation.
5. **Backbone Support:** An independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative's vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy and mobilizing resources.

Source: <http://www.fsg.org/approach-areas/collective-impact>

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK DATA

SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The development of an on-going assessment framework for the Family-Centred Service System requires that all participants understand the scope of the assessment - to agree in advance what is to be assessed and what is not. In the Family-Centred Service System environment, the scope of on-going assessment includes:

Understanding the Relationship between Family Level Change and System Level Change

In the FCSS approach, the strategy is to effect change at both the family/neighbourhood level and at the system level. The impact of change at the two levels is inter-dependant, meaning one cannot assess change at one level without understanding how that change was influenced by the other level. Therefore it is necessary that the scope of assessment monitors the change taking place at and between both levels, even though the approach to change is different for each.

Focusing on the Family's Experience

Monitoring service integration is about understanding the family's experience connecting to services, not their experience with the services themselves. While periodic evaluation of the efficacy of specific programs and services is important in determining if that program or service is meeting its objectives, it is the family's ability to access the service that is important to monitor in the assessment of integration.

Focusing on How the System is Changing

System change drives outcome change; we need to understand how the service system is evolving and the impact that change is having on the family's service experiences. Therefore, assessment must look at how system partners themselves are changing to a common, family-centred model of service delivery - how organizations are aligning internally and how the relationships amongst partners has evolved.

Focusing on Essential Indicators

A well-articulated Theory of Change identifies the indicators that measure if there has been a change, and if so, why that change has happened. Careful attention to the identification of relevant indicators and how they will be measured is important, as problems can arise when the indicators are not: measurable, measurable at a wrong interval or frequency or not predictive of the desired outcomes. In the Family-Centred Service System approach, the assessment framework and approach are derived from the family and system outcomes of the FCSS Theory of Change (see *The Family-Centred Service System Approach and the Family-Centred Service System Theory of Change*).

Maintaining a Provincial Lens

The Family-Centred Service System does not operate in isolation - there are many other integration strategies being developed in London and across the Province. While perhaps more developed than other integration initiatives, the specifics of the London assessment framework needs to be balanced within the context of this broader system change.



OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS ASSESSING THE FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE

The following table provides a summary of the outcomes and recommended indicators that should be included in the ongoing assessment framework. Most of these indicators can be measured quantitatively. However, it is critical that these mostly quantitative indicators be supplemented with narratives from stakeholders to incorporate the nuance and complexity of real life service experiences and how they shape interpretation of the data.

Family Impact	
Outcome	Indicators
Families experience reduced storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of families that are comfortable with the number of times they tell their story before receiving service # of service providers families speak to before accessing service
Families have a better and more consistent experience when accessing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of families expressing satisfaction with their service experience # of families who report improved access to services in a timely manner # of families accessing additional services at Family Centre
Families can easily access a full range of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of families reporting they are knowledgeable about the service system # and range of programs and services offered at Family Centres # of participants accessing programs in Family Centres # of participants accessing multiple programs in Family Centres
Families experience shorter wait times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of families experiencing reduced wait times # of service providers with waitlist reduction strategies
Families are connected and engaged in their neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of opportunities for families to be engaged in Family Centre # of Family Centre volunteers who live in the neighbourhood
System Impact	
Outcome	Indicators
Child-centred, family-focused services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of residents that participate in decision-making regarding the Family-Centred Service System Hours of operation of Family Centres Staff members responsive to diversity in the community
Client-centred, integrated service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased information sharing between service providers # of new collaborations or partnerships between service providers # of service providers involved with Family Centres # of appropriate referrals and follow-ups made between partner organizations
Less fragmentation and duplication in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased inter-professional awareness among service providers Increased integration levels among service providers Decreased duplication of services in community
Easier, improved and timely access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of families who know about Family Centres # of unique families visiting the Family Centre # of families making Family Centre their 'first stop'

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FOR PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The previous table of outcomes and recommended indicators provides the information necessary to assess the family's and the service provider's experience with the integrated system. The following table lists administrative data that should be collected for operational purposes. This information is useful in monitoring the overall operating performance of the system.

Outcomes / process being monitored	Example of performance indicators that would be collected/tracked
Program participation/usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of children that participate in programs (by program, age etc.) # of children that participate in multiple programs
Family profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of children that are not participating (or profile of non-users) Proportion of children from immediate neighbourhood/neighbouring area Proportion of children in the neighbourhood who access services or programs at the centre # of unique families or households coming to the centre/year relative to number of families in community
Family Centre operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hours of operation (total number of hours open weekly, total staff hours, etc.) # and range of programs and services offered # and range of core services offered Number of service providers involved in the centre Turnover rate of staff (including volunteers) Sufficiency of current resources to meet demand
Waitlists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # programs or services with waitlists Length of waitlists (by program) # of programs with plan/steps defined to reduce waitlist
Referrals/connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking of where referrals are made # of referrals made/year per service or program Service providers' descriptions of referrals made to FC
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking of where people heard about the centre from (word of mouth, signs, referrals, etc.) Proportion of teachers, staff etc. in local schools that are aware of the services Effectiveness of communication strategies
Integration/collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff awareness of programs and services Effective horizontal and vertical communication Improved access to space in neighbourhood Inter-professional and collaborative efforts undertaken at the Family Centre (# of partnerships formed)

It is understood that individual service providers may already routinely collect this type of data. However, there is no overall systems approach, and therefore no guaranteed uniformity in the quantity, quality and consistency of the data. There are also differences in data collection methodology (e.g. sign-in sheets, electronic records, registration forms, etc.) that make data aggregation difficult.

In order for administrative data to be collected efficiently, the service provider network must agree on uniform standards and processes, including data definitions and the methodology and timing of collection. The investment in developing these standards will be rewarded by a more holistic understanding of the service system and improved reporting capability to the funders of Family-Centred Service System partners.

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK METHODOLOGY

REFERRAL DATA

In a fragmented service system, families may be “bounced” from provider to provider, telling their story over and over again until they are (eventually) connected to the service they need.

Families may have multiple needs and we know that no single service provider can do it all. Referrals between organizations will continue to occur in an integrated service system. A referral data tracking system provides vital information on the ease with which families navigate services.

Referral data records the number and type of referrals made between organizations as one method to measure the level of coordination between service providers. Referral data can also be used to assess the effectiveness of each referral, measuring if the referral is acceptable (i.e. a seamless experience and an appropriate connection for the family).

Referral data tracking systems can range from straightforward to complex.

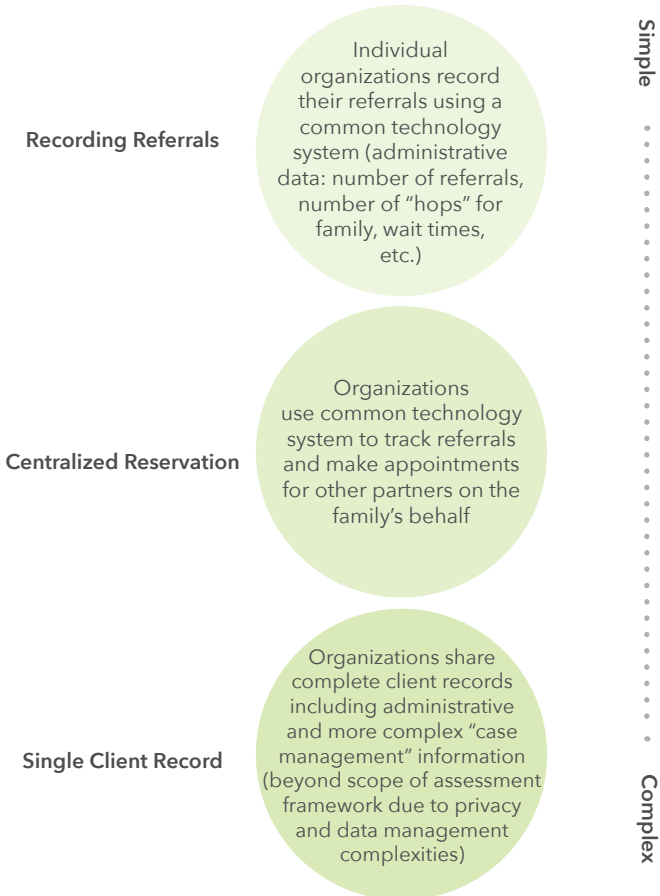
MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The data collection method is determined by the type of data that is being collected, including the frequency, timing and duration of data collection and whether the data is quantitative or qualitative.

In the Family-Centred Service System approach, the range of data is quite large, requiring a mixed methodology assessment framework that looks at quantitative and qualitative data, some of which is measured over time.

Measuring the Family and the Service Provider's Experience

On balance, surveys and focus groups are the most effective and feasible method of collecting experiential



data, both quantitative and qualitative, associated with the families’ and service providers’ experiences with the system. In addition to generating “hard data”, properly constructed surveys and focus groups provide in-depth understanding of how the participants feel about the system and their experience in using it. Surveys and focus groups are also fairly flexible, providing control over the timing and scope of questioning.

A limitation of surveys and focus groups is that they tend to use “samples of convenience”, which means that there is always a risk that the results are not truly indicative of the total population.



Administrative Data for Operating Performance Monitoring

Administrative data includes information such as operating hours, program scheduling, wait times and usage statistics and basic non-identifiable demographic information, allowing for quantitative understandings of “what’s happening”. An integrated technological solution that records and tracks the common data elements across service providers is the preferred approach for collecting, analyzing and using administrative data.

There are a number of inherent challenges in implementing a technology solution. All participants must agree on the data that is to be collected and how it is to be collected. There are real and perceived barriers to sharing data, and questions about who is responsible for the storing, aggregation and analysis of data elements. There are also questions about how the

collection and analysis of the data will be resourced. Nevertheless, there are a number of networks across the Province that are developing working systems for the sharing of administrative data and that might be able to provide guidance on how to proceed

Referral Data

A referral tracking system can be as simple as a formatted email message requesting an appointment through to service providers scheduling appointments for other organizations using a common technology system. These referral and appointment systems will be able to track the time between referral and appointment and provide additional information about the speed and efficiency of referrals. An integrated technological solution that tracks the number and efficacy of referrals is the preferred approach for tracking this type of data.

DEVELOPING A SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO DEVELOP A SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM?

From an operational perspective, **two key conditions for the development of a shared measurement system** have been identified:

Data Sharing and Privacy

Legislation that protects the family's rights to confidentiality helps create trust in the service system. Service providers work in environments that often have multiple legislative requirements and may choose risk-averse stances on data-sharing when their mandate to do so is unclear. Service providers need clarity and assurance from government that data collection in an integrated data system is in compliance with appropriate legislation, and they need to be able to communicate this to families with confidence. Many privacy concerns may be a matter of perception, rather than reality, but the impact on data-sharing is real.

Technological Infrastructure

An integrated data system requires a standard of shared technological infrastructure across the service system, including:

- A robust database solution that works across jurisdictions and locations
- Terminals or workstations that allow data to be collected from families
 - These are likely to vary according to the location and use
- A simple "check-in" technology for families (e.g. log-in screen, swipe card)
- A unique identifier for each individual
- An interface for service providers to input supplementary information related to service provision
- Analysis and reporting tools

Data sharing agreements provide a means for organizations to determine what data can and cannot be shared and specifies a clear process for doing so.

From a governance perspective, **two additional conditions for the development of a shared measurement system** have been identified:

Leadership

System change is not a "quick win." It requires deep, sustained investment - in all its forms - to occur. Leaders within the service system must publically and continually champion the shared evaluation and monitoring framework for service integration and demonstrate long-term investment in long-term change. Leadership of this sort generates trust, which is a fundamental component of moving toward a culture of collaboration and system integration.

Capacity-Building

Simply stated, change happens when people start doing things differently. As we move toward integration and a shared evaluation and monitoring framework, people working on the ground will need new skills and capacities to realize the vision for change. Integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks - and service integration in general - require appropriate investments in capacity-building.

Principles of an Integrated Data System for Evaluation and Monitoring Service Integration

- 1 Families are in complete control over their data at all times
 - Any data-sharing between organizations happens via informed consent from families
- 2 Individual, anonymous identifiers are used for individuals and families that work across jurisdictions
- 3 Centralized collection of demographic and usage data, ideally a single entity collecting on behalf of the system
 - This approach reduces the need for sharing and aggregating data between organizations and the privacy concerns that may arise
 - More personal "case management" information from families may not be suitable for data-sharing in the short-term

The Family-Centred Service System has reached another significant milestone in its growth and evolution. The Impact Assessment provides clear proof that the approach works at both the neighborhood level and the system level, and is having a positive impact on all five key outcomes for families. **Family outcomes are improving.**

The Family-Centred Service System is still a long way from achieving its ultimate vision, but it is clear the path we are on is the right one to follow. Family Centres and the Family-Centred Service System approach are working and we owe it to our community to support the continued growth and development of the family-centred approach.

The Family-Centred Service System Impact Assessment demonstrated that our system already has most of the building blocks needed to develop and implement a permanent shared assessment framework. Development of this shared measurement system will guide the Family-Centred Service System in its continued growth and evolution. The permanent assessment framework should consist of three kinds of information:

- Outcomes and indicators that measure the change families and service providers are experiencing
- Administrative data to track and monitor overall operating performance
- Information on the speed and efficiency of the referral process as provided by analyzing simple referral/appointment scheduling systems

