

EVALUATION, POLICY AND PRACTICE

COLLABORATING ACROSS AGENCIES TO EVALUATE A PROJECT TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN
ENGAGING IN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

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Evaluation, policy and practice: collaborating across agencies to evaluate a project to improve outcomes for children engaging in anti-social behaviour

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‘Delivering Crime Prevention: Making the evidence work’

Presentation

- practical challenges in fitting together research, policy development and program design
- challenges that arise in such collaborations
- benefits that an embedded evaluation design can offer to policy makers and practitioners

Responsible Parenting Initiative

...aims to promote the responsibility of parents in ensuring that their children do not engage in anti social, truanting or offending behaviour and to provide appropriate assistance and support to enable them to meet this responsibility.

Outcomes

- Increase capacity to parent
- Improve socialisation of children
- Improve school attendance
- Reduce anti social behaviour
- Reduce juvenile crime

Evidence

- Parenting is a significant risk and protective factor in a child's development and behaviour
- Responsible, empowered parenting is a major strategy for successful early intervention

Pathways to Prevention, 1999

- Identified parenting as one of the key risk and protective factors associated with anti social and criminal behaviour
- Examples of risk factors include poor supervision and monitoring of the child and harsh or inconsistent discipline
- Examples of protective factors include supportive parent-child relationships

Weatherburn, 2004

“Factors associated with, or indicative of, inadequate parenting are among the strongest predictors of juvenile involvement in crime”

Positive Parenting, 2002

“ The national evaluation data has shown that the (Parenting) Program has shown to be associated – in the short term at least, and according to parent and staff reports – with a positive impact on parents. Moreover, though caution is warranted in interpretation due to methodological limitations in the available data, it appears that benefits were not less for Court Ordered parents than they were for parents attending under voluntary agreements”.

Legislation

- *Parental Support and Responsibility Bill 2005*
- Power to enter into RPA
- Departments of Education, Community Development and Justice may apply for a Responsible Parenting Order (RPO)
- Responsibility of agencies to provide services
- Capacity for information sharing agencies to share information and work collaboratively

Service

- Commitment to service provision
- Some parents require intensive, supervised support
- ParentSupport established in south east metropolitan corridor with plans for state-wide coverage

Collaboration

- Raising children is a shared responsibility
- Complex parenting / family functioning needs cannot be met by one service
- Some children, parents and families 'fall through the gaps'
- Parenting is not a 'stand alone' issue
- Interagency structures and tools are needed to enable service providers to work together

Evaluation

- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of RPAs and RPOs
- Evaluate the effectiveness of *ParentSupport*
- Evaluate the extent of interagency cooperation
- Inform practice as the program develops
- Benchmark the program
- Inform future program allocation for ongoing expansion of the initiative

Managing the evaluation

Strategies to address ability and willingness to provide data

- Legislation
- Data linkage
- Formal agency commitment
- Interagency reference group

Challenge

To identify an evaluation framework that will take into account the complexities of the RPI

- Program logic model, combined with
- Systems analysis
- This approach was first developed for use in a review of the UK Crime Reduction Program (Hemel et al. 2004)

Potential outcomes

Outcomes

Controllable outcomes

- Improved parenting behaviour

Meaningful outcomes

- Child outcomes
- Community outcomes

Child outcomes

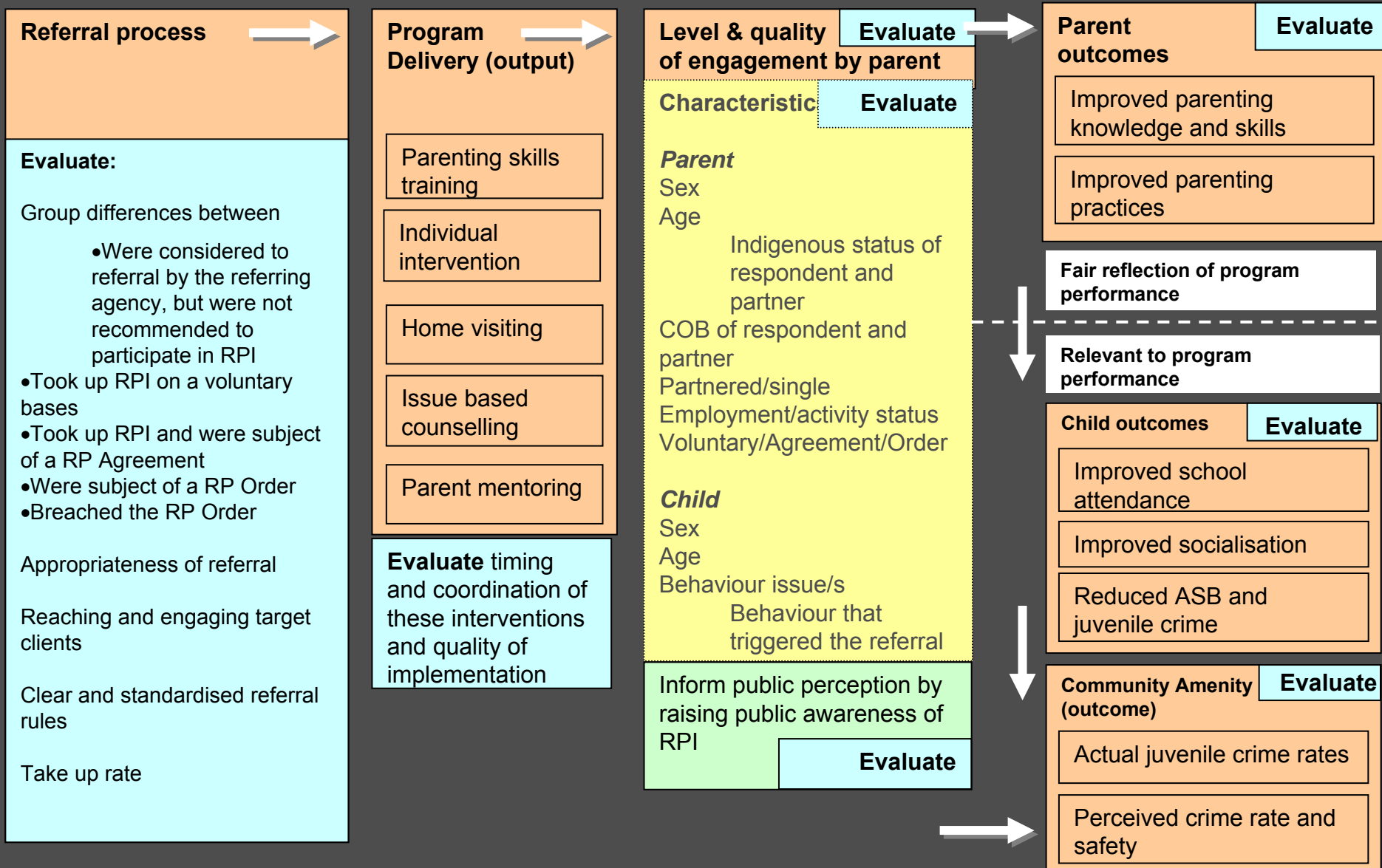
Improved parenting can improve child behaviour

- Improved school attendance
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Less juvenile crime by individual children

Community outcomes

Measured by local crime statistics and community safety survey

- Less juvenile crime in the area
- Increased perception of community safety
- Community outcomes



Systems analysis

- Process of interagency collaboration
- Learning process
- Organisational change process
- Diffusion of innovation

Implementation

Difficult issues

- Recruiting parents to participate

Layers of participation

- Interviews with parents
- Consent to follow up children through interagency data

Interagency cooperation

- Crucial to the evaluation
- Stakeholder interviews will be conducted
- Outcome indicators will be identified from administrative data sets
 - Identify key indicators that agencies already collect
 - Determine whether children and families are recorded in data systems
 - Establish data linkage project

Evaluation design

- First year is developmental stage
- The process will identify which aspects of the proposed methodology can be implemented in the “real” world

Benefits and learning

- Evaluation framework needs to be in place early
- Indicators can then be built in
- Process of methodology building and testing takes time
- Interagency issues need to be actively managed
- Real world barriers require flexible design