

Summary of Evaluation Tools

There are three evaluation tools that can be considered by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to complete the annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy. Remember that using multiple methods will result in a better analysis of your Title I Parent and Family Engagement Programs and Policy. Refer to the chart below for a summary of the evaluation tools.

Evaluation Tool	Focus Group 	Surveys 	Open Discussion Forum 
Target Audience	Title I Parents and Families	Title I Parents and Families	Title I Parents and Families
Description	Focus groups are small groups of parents and family members who come together in a confidential setting for structured evaluation to gather data on parent and family engagement policy and programs.	Surveys, which can be administered in multiple ways, are a commonly used method for collecting parent feedback in an anonymous format about parent and family engagement policy and programs.	Open Discussion Forums are similar to town hall meetings, by providing large groups of parents and families the opportunity to provide feedback on parent and family engagement policy and programs.
Time Consumption	Focus groups are the most time consuming because multiple meetings will need to be administered to ensure all parents and families have the opportunity to participate and provide feedback. (Most Time Consuming)	Surveys are easy to administer but can consume large amounts of time during the data collection process. (Less Time Consuming)	Open Discussion Forums are the least time consuming because they capture large amounts of parent input in a limited time period. (Least Time Consuming)
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows you to observe and hear parent expressions firsthand. • Fosters an open and safe environment that encourages parents and families to engage in discussion and interact among themselves. • People are willing to talk longer face-to-face versus filling out a form or talking on the phone. • Schools/Districts can implement a focus group without the need for excessive costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows parents and families to respond at their leisure rather than in the moment they are contacted or while in a group setting. • Commonly viewed as less intrusive and more private than other evaluation methods. • One of the most effective ways to give all parents and families an opportunity to be part of the evaluation process. • You will get more accurate answers to sensitive questions because it's confidential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effective method to gain massive input when striving to evaluate the school's policy and plan in a short amount of time. • Allows for a large audience or group of parents and families to participate. • Multiple meetings can be held to accommodate various schedules. • Provides the opportunity to get direct feedback.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits the number of opinions at one time that could come from having a larger or wider audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all parents may be able to participate due to low literacy levels. • Requires persistence with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a centralized location to host a large meeting outside of the school due to uncertainty about the size of

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group conversation may be dominated by only a few parents. • The group could be dominated by only a few parents or family members, which would result in only their opinions being heard. • The facilitator would have to find a centralized location to have the meetings, send out notices about the focus group, and make arrangements for parents and family members without transportation to attend. 	<p>follow-up and tracking to ensure high response rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some surveys require parents and families to have access to an electronic device and the internet to participate. • Mailing surveys can get expensive with the costs associated with postage, labels, copies, and envelopes. • You cannot engage in face to face interaction to gauge the conversation and determine sincerity. 	<p>your audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the meeting may be difficult to facilitate and ensure you allot time for a majority of parents and families to comment. • It could be hard to regain control of the group once it is lost. • The cost of transportation and child care can cause this cost-effective meeting to become expensive if it's held multiple times.
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Focus Group Facilitation Template

A focus group provides the opportunity for several people to get together in a confidential setting and it allows for structured evaluation that is intended to yield useful data. Schools and districts can facilitate focus groups as the main source of evaluating their Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Program; however, it would require that many focus group meetings be held to ensure all parents and families are given an opportunity to participate. Focus groups can also be used as supplemental evaluation to follow-up on the feedback that is received from surveys.

Start with an overview of the current Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Plan.

1. Think back to the beginning of the year, what programs would you like to see added to the parent and family engagement policy and plan in the future? Describe what you mean.
2. If applicable, to what extent have you found the parent resource center useful? Describe areas of improvement that could be made.
3. Let's talk about the opportunities you have had to network with other parents throughout the school year. Name a few instances when you have been able to take advantage of parent networking.
4. Explain how those networking experiences have helped you and your children during this school year.
5. If anyone has had a similar experience or one that differs, please share.
6. Name some ways in which the school has been successful in helping you and your children meet academic goals and challenges throughout the year? Describe what you mean.
7. To what extent have you been able to be involved in the revision and planning process of writing your school's Title I plan and policy?
8. How can the school and district get more parents and families to participate in this process? Describe what you mean.
9. Think back to some of the conversations you have had with other parents and challenges you may have faced yourself. What are some of the top barriers that prevent parents from being able to participate in school functions, activities, and planning events?
10. Explain what the school can do, within reason, to address these barriers.

Open Discussion Forum Template

This form of evaluation is designed to operate similarly to a town hall meeting. Its purpose is to provide parents with the opportunity to discuss matters of importance as it relates to evaluating the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy. The Open Discussion Forum can be conducted at the school or district level. It is advised that the Title I Director or a district administrator, as well as the principal, if held at the school level, be present during this meeting. It is important that the administrators understand that their role is to listen and support the open discussion with the objective of gaining the perspectives of parents.

Start with an overview of the current Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan and Policy.

1. What type of training or programs to improve student academic performance would you be likely to participate in if they were offered by the school?
2. What are some of the top barriers that prevent parents from being able to participate in school functions, activities, and planning events?
3. Explain what the school can do to address these barriers.
4. How can the school assist you with helping your children in the core content areas of mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies?
5. What hours are more convenient to conduct trainings, programs, parent meetings, and workshops?
6. If applicable, have enough materials been available to assist you with student learning via the Parent Resource Center (PRC)? Explain changes that could be made to improve the PRC.
7. By a show of hands, how many of you are aware of what the school improvement status is for your school? (Explain what the school's status is and where that information can be obtained.)
8. How can we get more parents involved in the revision and planning process of the school's Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan and Policy and other decision-making committees?

Checklist for Effective Title I Parent and Family Engagement Surveys

Consider the following do's and don'ts when writing and formatting your Title I Parent and Family Engagement Surveys:

Do:	Don't:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Begin with a family-friendly introduction that explains the purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Use jargon or complex phrases
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Begin with easy to answer questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for an overall assessment before asking topic details
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Give clear instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Insert unnecessary graphics or mix many font styles and sizes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep question structure simple	<input type="checkbox"/> Frame questions in the negative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask one question at a time	<input type="checkbox"/> Use abbreviations, contractions, or symbols
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain a parallel structure for all questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Mix different words for the same concept
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Define terms before asking the question	<input type="checkbox"/> Use “loaded” or “leading” words or phrases
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure the response categories are both exhaustive and mutually responsive	<input type="checkbox"/> Bounce around between topics or time periods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Label response categories with words rather than numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Use emotionally charged words, stereotypes, or prestige images
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask for a number of occurrences, rather than providing response categories such as often, seldom, or never	<input type="checkbox"/> Combine multiple response dimensions in the same question
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a mixture of open, closed, ranking, ordinal, matrix and rating type questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Give the impression that you are expecting a certain response
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be explicit about the period of time being referenced by the questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Forget to provide instructions for returning the completed survey

Adapted from: University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, (2010). *Survey Fundamentals: A Guide to Designing and Implementing Surveys*. Retrieved from http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourcelibrary/uploads/resources/Survey_Guide.pdf