



Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development

Tool for reflection

Introduction

This tool was developed to support the collective decision-making process concerning actions to promote total child development.^a It is designed for local and regional actors seeking to take an objective look at the services available in their areas based on the outcomes of the Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK). This tool can be used to conduct a self-evaluation based on the ten conditions for success set out in the document *Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development: State of Knowledge*.^b

How and when to use this tool

The tool may be used when undertaking general and concerted planning of actions within a given territory, fine-tuning an existing plan or evaluating the adequacy of a new action. It may also be useful for matching the ongoing adequacy of your actions against the conditions for success.

For each question related to the ten conditions for success, use statements based on the ones in the **blue** section to describe the current situation in your area and to decide which of the four categories applies to you. Based on your self-evaluation, the **orange** section offers ideas for actions you might consider while taking into account the values and context specific to your situation.

The ten conditions for success of actions are the following:

1. Promote cooperation and engagement in stakeholders
2. Meet the needs of children and families
3. Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors
4. Maintain a level of quality
5. Work towards proportionate universality
6. Focus on the child and all levels of influence
7. Be established early and allow continuity up to age 8
8. Allow significant intensity or significant accumulation
9. Be complementary and consistent
10. Take into account the characteristics of the children and families targeted

^a The format of this tool is based on a tool developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2008) (Community Capacity Building Tool: A tool for planning, building and reflecting on community capacity in community-based health projects).

^b This document or a summary of the conditions of success is available for download at <http://www.inspq.qc.ca/en>.

Condition for success no. 1: Promote cooperation and engagement in stakeholders

To what extent do current or intended actions provide for stakeholder cooperation and engagement?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We find that there are too few stakeholders in our group of partners (e.g., schools, municipal stakeholders, employability sector) to achieve concerted planning of actions.</p>	<p>We have a group of partners with representatives from multiple sectors, but certain bridges have yet to be built.</p>	<p>We have an active group of intersectoral partners.</p> <p>We are working to create a vision, set concrete objectives and develop mechanisms allowing for each partner’s involvement on multiple levels (selection, implementation, follow-up, evaluation).</p>	<p>We can count on strongly established cooperation among highly committed partners from various sectors and settings, including parents.</p> <p>We are working to uphold this cooperation while facilitating involvement on multiple levels.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a group made up of members from diverse sectors and settings. • Seek every opportunity to identify and bring in new partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster a positive climate with a flexible operating structure and transparent decision-making processes to assist in establishing strong ties around concrete actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish effective communication mechanisms and shared or collective leadership to facilitate cooperation among partners. These mechanisms should also be defined collectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop early strategies for upholding this cooperation over time to ensure the group’s long-term success.
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				

Condition for success no. 2: Meet the needs of children and families

To what extent do current or intended actions fulfil the needs of children and families in your community?

➔ Describe your situation taking into account various information sources, i.e. views expressed by parents and other community stakeholders, survey and research outcomes, and surveillance data available for your community.

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We had not considered analyzing needs taking into account so many sources. It is also not easy to obtain parents' representative views.</p>	<p>We are working to develop an overview of these needs taking account of the various information sources. At the same time, we are conducting a review of the actions available in our community (interventions, programs, services, measures to promote child development).</p>	<p>We believe that we have developed a fairly complete picture of the needs and available actions. Now we need to verify whether these correspond to one another.</p>	<p>We have conducted an analysis of the correspondence of needs to available actions and know what our objectives need to be.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first step involves developing the most complete possible picture of needs taking account of the various sources. • Parents' views are essential and may be obtained through surveys, focus groups and the like. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs may appear numerous at first; try to put them in order of priority, assigning greater weight to family views. • Aim to identify both the strengths and limitations of current actions, issues, challenges and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to determine whether each need (or needs category) is being fulfilled by the available actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is helpful to rally the group around selected objectives.
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				

Condition for success no. 3: Strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors

To what extent do current or intended actions help to strengthen various protective factors and reduce risk factors?

➔ Describe your situation in regard to these factors taking into account all levels of influence (child, family, community, society).^c

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We had not considered analyzing our actions taking protective or risk factors into account.	We note a number of actions specifically targeting the reduction of risk factors.	We observe that the majority of actions affect child and family-related factors more so than other living environments.	We have actions in place to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors on multiple levels of influence.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the described interventions/measures, it is frequently possible to extract the targeted protective/risk factors. Reflect on the consistency between the needs of children/families and the factors targeted by your overall actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to remember that both reinforcement of protective factors and reduction of risk factors promote child development. Although it is more common to focus on reducing risks, it is also important to explore possible actions specific to reinforcement of protective factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives with regard to supporting living environments and conditions sometimes require working with other partners. Actions targeting support of families at the municipal level may serve as a source of ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is also important to maintain some consistency among the targeted factors. Avoid spreading your efforts in too many directions.
Additional options to consider				

^c A table on protective factors is provided in the document Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development: State of Knowledge. Visit https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/1889_Actions_Promote_Child_Development.pdf.

Condition for success no. 4: Maintain a level of quality

To what extent does each current or intended action maintain a level of quality?

➔ Describe your situation in terms of all aspects of quality: theoretical and scientific support for actions, the importance placed on staff characteristics and measures to follow up on implementation and track effects.

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We are aware that this is an essential condition, but we are unsure how to proceed.</p>	<p>We feel that enhancing the quality of actions calls for a considerable investment of time and resources.</p>	<p>We have determined that a number of actions have shortcomings in some aspect of quality.</p>	<p>We find that the actions effectively maintain a level of quality.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions that outline characteristics of quality that are at hand, and those that are to be improved. • The next logical step would be to eliminate actions identified as weakest or to work to improve those with the greatest shortcomings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of quality can be improved by setting short-, medium- and long-term objectives. Increasing theoretical or scientific support, however, will require greater effort. The advice of experts in child development or assessment (implementation and effects) could be sought as needed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing focus should remain on the quality of actions through the use of periodic re-evaluations.
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				

Condition for success no. 5: Work towards proportionate universality

a) To what extent do current or intended actions support working towards proportionate universality?

- ➔ Proportionate universality consists of offering interventions geared for all children/families, but where the modalities or intensity vary according to the needs. Describe the client groups targeted by your actions and confirm whether the actions are adjusted to meet clients' needs.

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We have never heard of proportionate universality. At first glance, we appear to lack the resources to offer support to all families.</p>	<p>We find this approach relevant, but the main targets of our actions are the clients with the greatest needs.</p>	<p>We have at least some actions in place geared for all children/families, although very few are adjusted to meet needs.</p>	<p>We have numerous actions in place geared for all families, and the majority of these actions are adjusted to meet needs.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QSCDK results show that vulnerable children are distributed throughout the socioeconomic spectrum. • Offering a minimal level of support to all children and their families should be an objective towards which to gradually strive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even in scenarios involving limited resources, the ideal approach is to aim to provide basic support to the entire population while delivering more intensive support to client groups with greater needs. • Adjustment to meet needs could also take the form of participation in more than one action (cumulative intensity). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to ensure that all families can actually take part.
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				

b) To what extent are strategies to remove barriers^d to accessing resources/services among certain families (e.g., transportation) offered or planned?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We have not yet considered barriers to access.	We are aware of barriers and want to begin exploring this issue.	We have already identified the main barriers to access and implemented certain strategies to eliminate or lower them.	We are working together to implement strategies to improve access for everyone.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be useful to discuss this issue with key stakeholders or actors in your community to clearly identify the main barriers encountered by families in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be helpful to begin with one or two barriers and then ensure that these are eliminated or lowered before tackling more barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible to tackle multiple barriers at once if an organization allots significant time and joins forces with other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be useful to use a tool for tracking the effectiveness of implemented strategies so that adjustments can be made as required.
Additional options to consider				

^d A table on the main barriers and possible solutions is provided in the document Conditions for Success of Actions to Promote Total Child Development: State of Knowledge. Visit https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/1889_Actions_Promote_Child_Development.pdf.

Condition for success no. 6: Focus on the child and all levels of influence

Condition for success no. 7: Be established early and allow continuity up to age eight^e

a) To what extent do current or intended actions directly target children?

➔ Describe your situation in terms of all actions in place for babies, children aged 1 to 5, children going through transition periods (e.g., starting school) or children in the school system (aged 5 to 8).

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We do not have many actions that directly target children due to our many other priorities.	We have very limited resources and our actions do not meet the needs of all age groups.	We have direct actions in place for certain age groups.	We have direct actions in place for all age groups.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be useful to analyze what is currently offered directly to children (sufficient quantity of daycare places, reading activities at the library, summer camp to facilitate the transition to school, etc.). These are actions targeting different age groups (without gaps on the age continuum) that increase the influence over child development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In scenarios where resources are limited, it may be preferable to prioritize missing actions to ensure some level of coverage for all age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target having at least minimum direct actions for all age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check to ensure that actions are complementary and consistent. Allocate all necessary energy (human and financial) and resources to ensure that direct actions are implemented as intended.
Additional options to consider				

^e Three questions are associated with conditions for success nos. 6 and 7.

b) To what extent do current or intended actions aim to support parents and families?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We need to analyze our actions based on this framework.	We focus our planning on the 0–5 age group, which excludes pregnant women and families with school-aged-children.	We have actions in place for selected subgroups only.	We have actions in place targeting parents and families (pre-birth to age 8).
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of parents and families may vary widely depending on the ages of their children. • It may be necessary to cooperate with other groups to ensure consistent and complementary coverage for all age groups. • Planning needs to focus on pregnancy and then children up to 8 years of age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support to pregnant women ensures very early intervention in child development, while continuing support after children start school is important to maintain gains achieved at an earlier age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to offer at least a minimum level of actions to all age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that actions are complementary and consistent. • Allocate all necessary energy and resources to ensure that direct actions are implemented as intended.
Additional options to consider				

c) To what extent do current or intended actions support the living environment and conditions of families?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We have difficulty including actions related to living environments, as our resources do not allow for this.</p>	<p>We are aware of the aspects that need attention, but the associated actions consume significant resources.</p>	<p>We are planning actions, but they will take time to implement.</p>	<p>We have short-, medium- and long-term actions in place for living environments and conditions.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be useful to discuss this aspect with other community stakeholders or collaborative organizations who can take action concerning families’ social, economic or physical environment. They may contribute to the planning process and implementation of some actions. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It appears entirely logical to plan actions in increments with short- and medium-term goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that actions are complementary and consistent. Allocate all necessary energy and resources to ensure that direct actions are implemented as intended.
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				

Condition for success no. 8: Permit significant intensity or significant accumulation

a) To what extent do current or intended actions permit significant intensity or significant accumulation?

➔ Describe the intensity of your actions in terms of duration, frequency and means used.

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We have never analyzed the intensity of our actions.	We are aware of the importance of offering significant intensity, but we are unsure how to proceed.	We have some actions in place whose intensity or accumulation is unrelated to the objectives.	Our actions are associated with significant intensity or significant cumulative intensity.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It may be useful to explore your own actions, then to question key stakeholders or actors in your community to determine whether the intensity of an action is significant for achieving the objectives, or how to group actions to support cumulative intensity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze each action by considering whether it is possible to achieve objectives (or factors) at the proposed intensity. For actions whose intensity appears inadequate, determine whether other actions would support cumulative intensity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing other variables (duration, frequency, means) may occasionally help. Targeting the accumulation of actions may be a realistic objective even over the short term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is also important to ensure that strategies are in place to uphold the participation of children/families and to effectively support cumulative intensity through participation in multiple actions.
Additional options to consider				

b) To what extent are there current or intended activities for reinforcement of gains (recall over time)?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We have not offered or considered this type of activity.	We see the relevance of these activities but only offer them rarely as part of our overall actions.	Activities for the reinforcement of gains are provided mainly for actions targeting children or their parents.	The majority of our actions include activities for the reinforcement of gains.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up workshops, refresher activities and additional sessions could assist in consolidating gains over time. • Once actions are found to be effective, it may be useful to incorporate activities gradually to reinforce gains over time. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities may take various forms depending on the original actions. Actions targeting living conditions or environments may also benefit from activities that reinforce the benefits of the original action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to monitor the effectiveness of these activities and make adjustments as needed.
Additional options to consider				

Condition for success no. 9: Be complementary and consistent

To what extent are current or intended actions complementary and consistent?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	We have not seriously considered the complementarity and consistency of our actions.	We are aware of the relevance of this condition, but we are unsure how to proceed.	We have planned mechanisms and strategies to ensure that our actions are complementary and consistent, but we have not yet implemented them.	We have mechanisms in place for such purposes as facilitating the transition between interventions and the sharing of resources and information.
Possible avenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This involves another way of doing things that sometimes includes reviewing the organization of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on communication mechanisms between partners may be a good start. Working on communication mechanisms between partners may be a good start. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is easier to start with one or two strategies and ensure that they are effectively in place before adding others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is now necessary to track the effectiveness of these mechanisms and make adjustments as needed.
Additional options to consider				

Condition for success no. 10: Take into account the characteristics of the children and families targeted

To what extent do current or intended actions take into account the child’s developmental stage or the family’s cultural characteristics?

Self-evaluation	First steps <input type="checkbox"/>	Some assets <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady progress <input type="checkbox"/>	On the road to success <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>We have not considered adapting our actions to the diverse characteristics of the children/families.</p>	<p>We have very few actions in place at this time that are sensitive to the diversity of children/families.</p>	<p>We note that some of our actions demonstrate sensitivity to diversity.</p>	<p>We have actions in place adapted to the diverse characteristics of children/families.</p>
<p>Possible avenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actual effectiveness of actions is determined by their correspondence to the interests and realities of each child, family and cultural community. Share information on positive cultural adjustments with families and stakeholders familiar with the families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To start, consider making certain minor, simpler adjustments (activity type, format, content, duration, etc.). Then, short-, medium- and long-term changes can be planned. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to evaluate members’ satisfaction with the adapted actions (members of cultural communities, those occupying different social roles, parents of children of different ages, parents of children with special needs, etc.).
<p>Additional options to consider</p>				



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AUTHOR

Julie Poissant, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

SCIENTIFIC DIRECTION

Réal Morin, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE FOLLOWING WORKING COMMITTEE

Luce Bordeleau, Direction de santé publique de la Montérégie
Nathalie Bouvrette, Direction régionale de l'Outaouais, Ministère de
l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
Sonia Daly, Avenir d'enfants
Stéphanie Leclerc, Direction de santé publique de l'Outaouais
Marie-Josée Pineault, Direction de santé publique du
Bas-Saint-Laurent
Leah Walz, Direction de santé publique de Montréal

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Development (JIIECD) and the other professionals who volunteered
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WORKING GROUP, INTERVENTION COMPONENT

Caroline Caux, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
Marie Moisan, Ministère de la Famille
Danielle Bordeleau, Ministère de la Famille
Marie-Agnès Lebreton, Avenir d'enfants
Renée Cyr, Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie
Christiane Bourdages Simpson, Ministère de l'Éducation,
du Loisir et du Sport
Diane Tardif, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

VOLUNTEERS

Institut national de santé publique du Québec

Jean Tremblay, Karine Souffez, Priscilla Labelle, Mai Thanh Tu

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, directions régionales de santé publique and centres de santé et de services sociaux

Louise Desjardins, Jacinthe Dumont, Sylvie Garnier, Denise Gendron,
Victoire Giguère, Lyne Jobin, Marcella Kafka, Stéphanie Leclerc,
Diane Martel, Josée Martel, Cécilia Élisabeth Ponce, Fanie Roy, France
Lafrenière, Lise Ouellet, Johanne Croteau

Avenir d'enfants

Nathalie Plourde, Michèle Poirier, Claude Chênevert,
Christine O'Donoghue, Violaine Bélanger

Other partners

Isabelle Asselin et Geneviève Deschênes (CAPS)
Martine Yelle, Annick Bachand (COSMOSS)

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