

# **How to Evaluate a WIC Nutrition Education Program**

**California WIC Program**  
*September 2002*



# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	1
Purpose of Evaluation	2
Evaluation Versus Research	4
Types of Evaluation	5
Formative Evaluation	5
Process Evaluation	5
Outcome Evaluation	5
Evaluation Methods	7
Qualitative Methods	7
Quantitative Methods	21
Evaluation Credibility	27
Developing an Evaluation Plan	28
Writing the Evaluation Report	31
Suggested Readings	33



## **Introduction**

---

### **Why Evaluate?**

WIC designs nutrition education programs to stress the relationship between proper nutrition and good health to encourage WIC families to make positive changes in their behaviors. But how do we know that our efforts are working and how do we determine what is needed to improve our efforts?

Evaluation is a way of getting answers to these and other questions.

---

### **What Is Evaluation?**

Evaluation is the systematic examination and assessment of a program and its effects.

---

### **How Do You Evaluate?**

This booklet provides information about how to evaluate a WIC program.

The booklet contains information about:

- the definition of evaluation
  - the purpose of evaluation
  - the difference between academic research and program evaluation
  - the three types of evaluation
  - several methods to collect qualitative and quantitative evaluation data
  - the six steps of the evaluation process
  - the basic content of an evaluation report
  - designing the evaluation component of a nutrition education program
-

## Purpose of Evaluation

---

### Main Reasons

We evaluate our programs for many reasons. We evaluate mainly to:

- assess participants
  - develop the program
  - improve the program
  - measure program effectiveness
  - ensure funding
- 

### Who Will Use the Evaluation Results?

The reasons for evaluating a program will depend on who will use the evaluation results. Evaluation may be conducted for:

- the local agency director
  - local agency staff
  - participants
  - the State WIC Program
  - other local agencies
  - funding organizations
- 

### Reasons for Evaluation

The chart that follows describes these main reasons in more detail. Remember: why we evaluate our programs will depend greatly on who might use the evaluation results.

---

## Purpose of Evaluation

### Some Main Reasons Why We Evaluate

Reason	Description
<b>To Assess Participants</b>	To identify participants': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• needs and wants</li> <li>• changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes</li> <li>• satisfaction with the program</li> </ul>
<b>To Help Develop the Program</b>	To help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify educational strategies/approaches to be used</li> <li>• specify the content for each session</li> <li>• identify staff training needs</li> </ul>
<b>To Help Improve the Program</b>	To help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the most effective educational strategies/approaches to use</li> <li>• identify specific changes to be made</li> </ul>
<b>To Measure Program Effectiveness</b>	To identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effective strategies</li> <li>• lessons learned</li> <li>• factors that limit success</li> </ul>
<b>To Ensure Funding</b>	To determine if resources and funds are being used effectively  To demonstrate accountability

## Evaluation versus Research

**Misunderstanding**

People often think that program evaluation must follow an academic research model. This is NOT true.

**NOT Basic Research**

Program evaluation is NOT basic research.

**Differences**

The chart below lists some of the main differences between program evaluation and basic research.

<b>Program Evaluation</b>	<b>Basic Research</b>
Looks at what does happen in the real world	Looks at what can happen by studying controlled conditions
Primary goal is to learn how to improve the program	Primary goal is to add to a body of knowledge
Assesses merit, worth, importance, effectiveness	Emphasizes associations between variables
Controlled by stakeholders	Controlled by investigator
Flexible design	Tightly controlled design
Broad	Narrowly-focused
Ongoing	Specific timeframe

## Types of Evaluation

### Three Types

There are three types of evaluation:

1. formative evaluation
2. process evaluation
3. outcome evaluation

### Descriptions and Examples

The chart that follows provides a brief description of each type of evaluation and some examples for each.

Type and Description	Examples
<p><b>Formative Evaluation</b> -An assessment that gathers information related to the <b>development</b> of the program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a participant needs assessment</li> <li>• Pre-testing group education materials</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process Evaluation</b> -An assessment that gathers information related to the <b>implementation</b> of the program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing program records, such as class rosters and lesson plans</li> <li>• Observing group education sessions</li> <li>• Identifying nutrition education approaches used</li> <li>• Analyzing demographics of the participants served</li> <li>• Assessing competencies of staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome Evaluation</b> (also called <b>Impact</b> or <b>Summative Evaluation</b>) -An assessment that gathers information related to the <b>effects</b> of the program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing pre- and post-tests</li> <li>• Conducting follow-up interviews of participants to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors</li> <li>• Reviewing ISIS data</li> </ul>

## Types of Evaluation

---

### **Importance of Formative and Process Evaluation**

Outcome evaluation is often the only evaluation used for nutrition education and yet formative and process evaluation are critical to a successful nutrition education program. **If your evaluation resources are limited, conduct formative and process evaluation first.**

Conduct outcome evaluation when your program is well established enough to potentially produce the desired outcomes.

Outcome evaluation will often not show positive results unless formative and process evaluation have taken place.

---

## Evaluation Methods

---

### Range of Methods

There are numerous evaluation methods. Methods range from a simple, one-question, open-ended interview of several participants to having thousands of participants complete a multi-page questionnaire.

---

### Two Categories

Evaluation methods are often categorized as:

- qualitative methods

or

  - quantitative methods
- 

### Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods provide **descriptive** information about a situation, program barrier, program strength, and/or participant's behavior.

Qualitative methods include:

- case studies
  - content analysis
  - focus groups
  - interviews
  - observations
  - photo-ethnography (such as Photovoice)
- 

### Description of Qualitative Methods

The chart that follows provides a description of several qualitative methods and advantages and disadvantages for each.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Qualitative Methods

Method and Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Case Studies</b> -Collection of in-depth information of how a program or program component works, especially in relation to its participants</p>	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Provides rich details about a program or a program component</p> <p>Highlights program success</p> <p>Practical way to “get word out” to funding sources</p>	<p>Requires considerable time and energy</p> <p>Does not reveal much about a program’s overall impact</p>
<p><b>Content Analysis</b> -Review and analysis of the information a program routinely collects, such as participant records, class curricula, staffing records</p>	<p>No cost for data collection</p> <p>Practical, as it uses already existing data</p> <p>Data collection is already part of program operations</p>	<p>Record-keeping may not always be accurate</p> <p>Available information may not be complete or relevant to evaluation questions</p>
<p><b>Focus Groups</b> -Structured discussions in which a small group of people (5-12), led by a trained facilitator, discuss their perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and experiences</p>	<p>Relatively inexpensive</p> <p>Individuals are more likely to provide candid responses</p> <p>Individuals build on each other’s ideas and comments</p> <p>Provides opportunity to explore new or unique perspectives</p> <p>Useful for identifying participants’ needs</p> <p>Useful for assessing program effectiveness</p>	<p>Requires a trained facilitator, preferably from the target population</p> <p>Generates a lot of qualitative data that may be difficult to analyze</p> <p>Outspoken individuals may dominate discussion</p> <p>Quality of the discussion and usefulness depend on skill of facilitator</p> <p>Findings cannot be generalized to larger population since group is not a random sample</p>

# Evaluation Methods

## Qualitative Methods

Method and Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structured</b> -A series of pre-determined questions posed to determine a participant's feelings, views, motivations, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Unstructured</b> -Interviews that do NOT use a predetermined format or structure; questions arise during a "free-flowing" discussion based on the interviewees' responses</li> </ul>	<p>Responses are in the participants' words</p> <p>Provides in-depth responses</p> <p>Reveals attitudes and feelings that may not be available from a questionnaire</p> <p>Provides opportunity to have questions clarified</p>	<p>Expensive</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>Requires a trained interviewer</p> <p>Interviewer may share a biased view</p> <p>Difficult to record responses for unstructured interviews</p> <p>Some participants may find interviews threatening or invasive</p>
<p><b>Observations</b></p> <p>-Recordings by a trained observer describing a fact or occurrence regarding the program such as environment, educational sessions, and/or participant behaviors</p>	<p>Useful for evaluating behavior change</p> <p>Useful for generating information about how a program operates</p> <p>Useful for evaluating skills of staff</p>	<p>Expensive</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>Observers must be trained to recognize and interpret specific occurrences</p> <p>Presence of observer may alter participant's behavior</p> <p>Some participants may be uncomfortable being observed</p>
<p><b>Photo-Ethnography</b></p> <p>-Method in which photos are taken by a small group of the target population to depict their everyday lives and behaviors to capture their motives, attitudes, insights and intentions</p> <p>For more information, see <i>Photovoice.com</i></p>	<p>Relatively inexpensive</p> <p>Focuses on one open-ended question</p> <p>Participants take control of "where they want to go"</p>	<p>Requires training, such as use of a camera</p> <p>May be difficult for target population to choose photos that most accurately reflect their issues</p>

## **Evaluation Methods**

---

### **Using Case Studies**

Case studies can be especially useful for evaluating:

- an innovative program
  - an existing program in a new setting
  - a newly-established program
  - unique program outcomes
- 

### **Case Study Guidelines**

The guidelines that follow provide information on how to use case studies.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Guidelines for Case Studies

<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine the case to be studied. What will be evaluated? (Will you study a group education session that addresses a specific topic? -group education at a particular site? - sessions that use a particular nutrition education approach? -individual education conducted by a specific staff person?)</li></ul>
<p><b>Sampling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify samples that serve the purpose of the evaluation (For example, if you wish to study Facilitated Group Discussion (FGD) sessions you could sample 5 such sessions conducted in one month and 5 non-FGD sessions in that same month.)</li></ul>
<p><b>Data Collection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine what questions will be addressed. (Who was involved? What did they do? When did activities take place? Where did activities take place? How were activities conducted?)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify how data will be collected. (Will interviews, focus groups, observations and/or program records be used?)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Collect data from multiple sources and use several evaluators.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Collect detailed information. (This will aid later with interpretation of data.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid evaluator bias.</li></ul>
<p><b>Data Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review information collected.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on key findings.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Address alternative explanations when interpreting data.</li></ul>
<p><b>Report Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Write the report in an objective manner.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Present data in an easy-to-read format, using graphics where possible.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Include background information, data collection methods, results, and recommendations</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Have people who are well informed about the program review the draft report.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide sufficient detail, so that where applicable the program or components may be replicated.</li></ul>

## Evaluation Methods

---

**Using Content Analysis** Content analysis is a method that makes use of information a program routinely collects.

---

**Content Analysis Guidelines** The guidelines that follow provide information on how to use content analysis.

### Guidelines for Content Analysis

#### Inventory

- List all data currently collected by your program. (Data may include minutes of staff meetings, curricula for group education sessions, participant 24-hour dietary recall forms, annual staff training plan/schedule, ISIS data.)
- Identify who has the data and how it can be obtained.

#### Gather and Organize Information

- Organize the list of currently available data into 2 categories:
  - Relevant to evaluation question(s)
  - Not relevant to evaluation question(s) (Remember more data is not necessarily better!)
- Gather the relevant data.

#### Data Analysis

- Review the data that is relevant to your evaluation.
- Sort this data into categories.
- Analyze this data.
  - Are there consistent patterns or trends?
  - What conclusions can be made from the data?
  - Is additional evaluation needed?
- Focus on key findings.

#### Report Writing

- Write the report in an objective manner.
- Present data in an easy-to-read format, using graphics where possible.
- Include background information, data collection methods, results, and recommendations
- Have people who are well informed about the program review the draft report.
- If additional evaluation is needed indicate this.

## Evaluation Methods

---

### **Using Focus Groups**

The use of focus groups is a qualitative evaluation method that has been used in WIC.

Focus groups are especially useful for:

- assessing participants' needs, opinions, perceptions, attitudes
- identifying issues important to participants
- generating ideas for program content, concepts, and activities
- pre-testing educational materials
- identifying program barriers
- developing instruments for quantitative evaluation

---

### **Focus Group Guidelines**

The guidelines that follow provide step-by-step information on how to establish and conduct focus groups.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Guidelines for Focus Groups

#### Development

- Determine what will be evaluated and what questions will be asked.
- Establish eligibility criteria (What “type” of person are you looking for? Identify specifics such as ethnicity, age, and residence.).
- Determine how many focus groups will be conducted. (Four focus groups (~5-12 participants per group) for each topic is advised.
- Determine how responses will be recorded (audiotapes, videotapes, note-taking by a recorder/observer).
- Recruit and train facilitator(s) and recorder(s)/observer(s).
- Determine when focus groups will be conducted. Be sensitive to participants’ time demands (work and school schedules, holidays).
- Identify (and make arrangements for use if needed) a location that:
  - is neutral
  - is easy for participants to find
  - has chairs that can be moved into a circle or around a table
- Identify and make arrangements to acquire incentives for participants (refreshments, diapers, cups, t-shirts, etc).
- Identify how childcare will be provided.
- Identify how participants will get transportation to and from the location.

#### Recruitment

- Using previously delineated eligibility criteria, recruit participants by:
  - telephone
  - poster announcements
  - face-to-face contacts, or
  - contacts with gatekeepers in the community
- Recruit at least 25% more people than needed, as some participants may not follow-through after commitment is made.
- Offer incentives, refreshments, childcare, and transportation as appropriate.
- Telephone participants **10-14 days** before the focus group meeting.
- Send a written invitation to participants **1 week** before the focus group meeting. Make sure invitation includes:
  - Date
  - Time (Schedule participants to come in 15-30 minutes early to allow for latecomers)
  - Location
  - Name of contact person and phone number
- Telephone participants **1 day** before focus group meeting to remind them of the meeting.

## Evaluation Methods

### Guidelines for Focus Groups

#### Preparation

- Be familiar with the topic.
- Make sure you speak the language of the group. (It is best if the facilitator is of the same gender, ethnicity, culture, etc. of the focus group members.)
- Review and field-test the discussion guide (list of previously developed questions) before you begin the focus group.
- Be familiar with group process.

#### Facilitation

- Use the language of the group. (Avoid jargon and acronyms.)
- Create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere (Start off with *"Thank you for coming..."*)
- Assure the group of anonymity and confidentiality.
- Ask questions using the discussion guide.
- Use follow-up probes where appropriate.
- Communicate clearly and precisely.
- Stay focused.
- Pace the group. Do NOT spend too much time on one question.
- Do NOT move too quickly to the next question; use the "5-second" pause.
- Do not "take over" or control the group.
- Be a good listener.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Do NOT show judgment.
- Empathize.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Be ready to deal with the unexpected.

#### Data Analysis

- Review the audiotape, videotape, or written recordings.
- Profile the data. Are there consistent patterns or trends? Do these differ by groups?
- If no patterns emerge, add more focus groups.
- Sort data into categories.

#### Report Writing

- Have the facilitator write the report if possible.
- Write the report in an objective manner.
- Present data in an easy-to-read format, using graphics where possible.
- Include background information, data collection methods, results, and recommendations
- Have people who are well informed about the program review the draft report.

## **Evaluation Methods**

---

### **Using Interviews**

Interviews can be especially useful for determining attitudes and feelings about your program.

---

### **Interviewing Guidelines**

The guidelines that follow provide information on how to conduct interviews.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Guidelines for Interviewing

#### Development

- Determine who will be interviewed. (What participant characteristics are relevant to your evaluation?) Will you be interviewing teen participants? first-time WIC participants?
- Determine how responses will be recorded (audiotapes, videotapes, note-taking by a recorder/observer). Whenever possible interviews should be tape-recorded.
- Develop the questionnaire.
  - Use structured interviews for collecting factual data.
  - Use unstructured interviews for collecting in-depth information on complex issues.
- Prepare an interviewer's guide that includes:
  - the purpose of the interview and how the information will be used
  - confidentiality of the information
  - interview questions, with additional questions if probing is needed
  - forms to record interviewee's responses
- Test the interview questions with staff and participants and make changes as needed.
- Identify how childcare, where needed, will be provided.

#### Training

- Train interviewers so that they are well trained to:
  - establish rapport with interviewees
  - ask questions
  - record responses

#### Interview

- Thank interviewee.
- Explain purpose of interview, how information will be used, and confidentiality.
- Ask for consent from the interviewee to have the interview tape-recorded.
- Ask questions following the interviewer's guide.
- Write down the interviewee's responses as stated.
- Ask for clarification if you do NOT understand what was said.

## Evaluation Methods

---

### Using Observations

Observations are useful for generating information about program operations, nutrition education sessions, staff skills, and/or participant behaviors.

---

### Guidelines for Observations

The guidelines that follow provide information on how to use observations.

## Guidelines for Observations

### Development

- Determine the questions to be answered. What will be evaluated? (Will you observe group education sessions that address a specific topic? -individual education sessions that address a specific topic? –a specific nutrition education approach?)
- Identify what will be observed. (Will you observe all aspects of a group education session? –participant behaviors during a group education session? -staff/instructor skills during a group education session?)
- Develop the observation protocol to help assure that observers are gathering pertinent information and using the same evaluation criteria.
- Develop the observation instrument (form).
- Develop rating of key indicators form.

### Training

- Train staff so that they are well trained to:
  - describe the setting where the observation takes place
  - identify characteristics of the people observed
  - describe the content of the activity/intervention
  - assess quality of the activity/intervention
  - refocus when an unanticipated event occurs
  - record detailed notes
- Train several staff. (This helps provide a larger volume of data and also may decrease observer bias.)

## Evaluation Methods

### Guidelines for Observations

#### Data Collection

- Collect data from several observers.
- Record detailed notes on *Observation Instrument*.
- Avoid evaluator bias.

#### Data Analysis

- Analyze data in tandem (while collecting data).
- Review information collected.
- Using data collected, rate key indicators.
- Focus on key findings.

#### Report Writing

- Write the report in an objective manner.
- Present data in an easy-to-read format, using graphics where possible.
- Include background information, results, and recommendations.
- Have people who are well informed about the program review the draft report.

## Evaluation Methods

### Using Photo-Ethnography

Photo-ethnography is useful for providing deep insights into a community’s problem or question.

### Guidelines for Photo-Ethnography

The guidelines that follow provide information on how to use photo-ethnography.

## Guidelines for Photo-Ethnography

### Development

- Identify the community/population targeted.
- Recruit a small group of community members.
- Have the group define the issue or problem.
- Have the group formulate an open-ended question they wish to address.
- Determine who will be the “audience” (who will view the photos).

### Training

- Provide group members with information on the photo-ethnography process.
- Train group members on the mechanical use of a camera.

### Data Collection (Picture Taking)

- Provide automatic cameras and film to trained members of the community.
- Determine the theme for photo taking.
- Allow members several weeks for exploring the question and taking photos.

### Data Analysis (Photo Selection)

- View photos taken by group members.
- Facilitate group discussion to allow members to describe meaning of their photo images.
- Select photos that most accurately reflect community.
- Group members identify the issues or themes that emerge.

### Presentation

- Present selected photo images.
- Document group members’ “stories.”
- Share photo images and “stories.”

## Evaluation Methods

---

### **Quantitative Methods**

Quantitative methods provide numerical information such as statistical profiles.

Quantitative methods include:

- project service record reviews
- questionnaires/surveys
- written tests

---

### **Description of Quantitative Methods**

The chart that follows provides a description of several quantitative methods and advantages and disadvantages for each.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Quantitative Methods

Method and Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Project Service Record Review</b>                      -A review of the records of services provided, such as number of phone calls made to a hotline, requests for information, number of participants attending each group session, or number of nutrition education contacts</p> <p><i>ISIS collects this type of data.</i></p>	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Useful for evaluating program operations such as staffing</p> <p>Opportunity to use existing data</p> <p>Data is objective and reliable</p>	<p>Time consuming</p> <p>Record-keeping may not always be accurate</p> <p>Available information may not be complete or relevant to the evaluation question(s)</p>
<p><b>Questionnaires/Surveys</b>                      -Series of questions, usually administered as a written form, computerized, or interview, that determine a participant's characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior</p>	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Provides anonymity to participants</p> <p>Closed-ended responses are easy to summarize</p>	<p>Written surveys have limited use for participants who have poor reading and/or writing skills</p> <p>Respondents may not understand questions</p> <p>Quality of results depends on participants' honesty, thoroughness and memory</p>
<p><b>Written Tests</b>                      -A printed or computer-based series of questions (true/false, multiple-choice, matching, short-answer, essay) designed to evaluate a participant's knowledge, attitudes, or behavioral intentions</p>	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Easy to administer</p> <p>Useful for assessing knowledge</p> <p>Data is objective</p>	<p>Limited use for participants who have poor reading and/or writing skills</p> <p>Do NOT directly measure skills or behavior</p> <p>Some participants are uncomfortable taking tests</p>

## Evaluation Methods

---

### Questionnaires

A questionnaire can be a simple way to collect quantitative as well as qualitative information.

---

### Guidelines for Developing a Questionnaire

The guidelines that follow provide information on questionnaires.

## Questionnaire Guidelines

### Development

- Determine what you would like to know.
  
- Develop the questionnaire.
  - Use simple words and short questions.
  - Use open-ended questions to determine answer categories.
  - Avoid using technical terms, jargon, the word “not” (since the reader may overlook it.)
  - Avoid questions that may feel threatening.
  - Limit the questionnaire to 1 or 2 pages.
  
- Provide simple and clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

### Field Testing

- Once you have developed the questionnaire, field test it to make sure it:
  - is clear
  - is easy to complete
  - collects the information you want
  
- Have your co-workers, and where possible, some participants complete the questionnaire. Find out how they interpreted the questions.

### Administration

- Administer the questionnaire as:
  - a written form to be completed by the participant with or without staff assistance
  - an interview completed by a staff person
  
- Give clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.
  
- For participants who have limited experience completing questionnaires or limited English language ability you may:
  - Read each question and pause while participants respond in writing
  - Read each question and record the responses for the participant

## Evaluation Methods

### Questionnaire Guidelines

#### **Data Analysis**

- Decide what you will do with incomplete questionnaires. Will you use the responses from the completed portion or disregard the entire questionnaire?
- If using a computer for data entry, make sure to check for data entry errors.
- If data is tabulated by hand, make sure to check for tabulation errors.
- Be consistent when making decisions about questionable responses.
- Paraphrase carefully the responses to open-ended responses.
- Compile data using charts and graphs.

## Evaluation Methods

---

### **Types of Questions**

There are several types of questions you may use on questionnaires. Questions may be:

- closed-ended

or

- open-ended

Closed-ended questions include:

- multiple-choice
  - ranking scale
  - rating scale
- 

### **Description of Types of Questions**

The chart that follows provides a description of each type of question and an example for each.

---

## Evaluation Methods

### Description and Examples of Types of Questions

Type of Question	Examples
<b>Closed-Ended:</b> Respondents choose from answers given to them	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Multiple-Choice</b>                      Respondents select from a list of two or more choices and select the one best response or all applicable responses.                 </li> </ul>	<p><i>How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you usually eat each day?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 0</li> <li>b. 1</li> <li>c. 2</li> <li>d. 3</li> <li>e. 4</li> <li>f. 5 or more</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Ranking Scale</b>                      Respondents order a list of items.                 </li> </ul>	<p><i>For the following list rank the topics in order of importance to you. Write a "1" for the most important, "2" for the second most important, and so on.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ <i>Being a Good Parent</i></li> <li>___ <i>Food Shopping on a Budget</i></li> <li>___ <i>Losing Weight after Pregnancy</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Rating Scale</b>                      Respondents select the choice that best describes their perceptions.                 </li> </ul>	<p><i>How useful for you was the group session "Infant Feeding"?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Somewhat</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not at all</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Open-Ended:</b> Respondents construct their own responses to questions</p>	<p><i>What did you learn during this group session that you will use at home?</i></p> <p><i>When do you usually exercise each day?</i></p> <p><i>How do you usually discipline your child?</i></p> <p><i>Who prepares meals in your family?</i></p>

## Evaluation Credibility

---

### Enhancing Credibility

To ensure that your evaluation is credible, make sure that the data you collect is:

- valid
  - reliable
- 

### Validity

Validity is the degree to which the information measures what is the “truth”.

---

### Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which the information is collected in a consistent manner.

---

### Ways to Increase Credibility

To increase credibility of results:

- have in-house staff review data collection instruments (improves validity)
  - have a small group of participants pilot test data collection instruments (improves validity)
  - use data collection instruments that have already been validated for your population or a similar population (improves validity)
-

## Developing an Evaluation Plan

---

### Developing Your Plan

As you develop an evaluation plan for your nutrition education program, you may wish to use the Six-Step Evaluation Process.

---

### Six-Step Evaluation Process

The Six-Step Evaluation Process is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Evaluation Working Group's evaluation framework. (See *Practical Evaluation of Public Health Programs*, 1991, by The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, School of Public Health and The Texas Department of Health.)

The six steps of this evaluation process are:

1. Engage stakeholders
  2. Identify program objectives
  3. Focus the evaluation design
  4. Gather credible evidence
  5. Analyze and interpret data
  6. Use evaluation findings and share lessons learned
- 

### Description of the Evaluation Process

The chart that follows provides a description of each of the six steps of this evaluation process.

---

## Developing an Evaluation Plan

### The Six-Step Evaluation Process

#### 1. Engage Stakeholders

Identify the people who have strong interest in what will be learned from the evaluation and what will be done with the results, such as:

- management
- program staff
- participants
- people with evaluation skills/expertise
- people from the community

Make sure to consult with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

#### 2. Identify Program Objectives

Identify the program objectives. Make sure they are well-written, realistic, measurable objectives that include:

- **When**-time (month, year) by or during which change or intervention will occur
- **What**-targeted health problem/behavior or intervention
- **Whom**-target population who will benefit
- **Where**-area in which target population is located
- **Who**-staff or agency responsible
- **How much**-quantity/amount of intervention

A **process objective** is a statement of the types of materials, programs or services to be provided to impact the outcome within a specific timeframe.

*Example: During FFY 2002-2003, staff of the Redwood County WIC Agency will provide 50 group nutrition education sessions on infant feeding using the FGD approach at the River Road Site.*

An **outcome objective** is a statement of the amount of change expected for a given health problem/condition for a specified population within a given timeframe.

*Example: By December 31, 2003, the percent of WIC participants served by Redwood County WIC Agency having a low intake of fruits and vegetables will have decreased from 28% to 20%.*

# Developing an Evaluation Plan

## The Six-Step Evaluation Process

### 3. Focus the Evaluation Design

Focus on:

- What questions will be addressed
- When the evaluation will be conducted and completed
- What evaluation methods will be used
- Who will perform the evaluation activities (Train data collectors where needed.)
- How the results will be used and disseminated

Do NOT expect the evaluation to address all questions.

### 4. Gather Credible Evidence

Credible data is the raw material of good evaluation.

Monitor quality and completeness of data.

### 5. Analyze and Interpret Data

Once all data has been collected, you will:

- Analyze the data (enter data into a computer, check for data entry errors, tabulate data, stratify data, present data in clear format).
- Interpret results. (What do results say?)
- Make recommendations based on the results.

### 6. Use Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned

Prepare a report of findings. (See *Writing an Evaluation Report*.)

Share the findings of the evaluation with stakeholders and others who may benefit.

Use the evaluation findings to improve the program.

## Writing the Evaluation Report

---

### Purpose

Preparing an evaluation report is a good way to get your results out to others.

Your report may be read by:

- your agency staff
  - nutrition education coordinators
  - other local WIC agencies
  - State WIC staff
  - funding organizations
- 

### Guidelines

Use the following general guidelines when you write the report:

- Write the report in an objective manner.
  - Write the report for the general reader who may not be familiar with your program.
  - Relate the results to the program objectives.
  - Use tables, graphs, and other graphics to display key data.
  - Have management and other agency staff review a draft of the report to review conclusions before they are finalized for the report.
  - Present program difficulties or shortfalls as well as successes.
- 

### Content

When writing the evaluation report you may wish to include the following:

- Title Page
  - Acknowledgments
  - Summary
  - Project Description
  - Evaluation Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion and Recommendations
- 

### Checklist

The checklist that follows provides details of what you may want to include in your evaluation report.

---

# Writing the Evaluation Report

## Report Guidelines

<b>Title Page</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Title of study</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Time period in which evaluation occurred</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Name of local agency</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Agency address, phone, e-mail address</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Name of contact person</li></ul>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Names of persons/organizations involved in the evaluation</li></ul>
<b>Summary</b> (no more than 1 page) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Purpose of evaluation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> General description of nutrition education program</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation method(s) used</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Key results</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Brief description of recommendations</li></ul>
<b>Project Description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Participant profile</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition education approaches and/or theories/models used</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation Methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation method(s) used</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Description of evaluation process (including sample selection) and time period</li></ul>
<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Charts, tables</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Main findings</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional findings</li></ul>
<b>Discussion and Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation of results</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Insights</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Recommended changes to nutrition education program</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Limitations</li></ul>

## **Suggested Readings**

1. *Another Look at Training Programs*, 1998, compiled by Donald L. Kirkpatrick, American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).
2. *Charting the Course for Evaluation: How Do We Measure the Success of Nutrition Education and Promotion in Food Assistance Programs?* Summary of Proceedings, February 28, 1997, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service, Office of Analysis and Evaluation.
3. *How Do They Know They Know? Evaluating Adult Learning*, 1998, by Jane Vella, Paula Berardinelli, and Jim Burrow, Jossey-Bass Publishers.
4. *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*, 2002, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity.
5. *Practical Evaluation of Public Health Programs*, 1991, by The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, School of Public Health and The Texas Department of Health, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of Schools of Public Health.