

A large red spiral graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of three concentric, overlapping circular lines that spiral inward from the left edge.

Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years (4) Evaluation: Why, What and How

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Evaluation

What to evaluate? (What counts as evidence?)

- Outcomes
- Impact
- Process

Why evaluate? (Whom does it serve?)

How to evaluate? (What type of evidence is valid?)

And how do these questions relate to children from poor and migrant families?

What to evaluate?

Outcomes (effects)

- Do children who attend this type of ECEC have a better vocabulary?
- Do parents in this program show more prosocial behaviour?
- Do these children perform better in school?

Who shall we compare with?

- Equally poor / migrant children/parents not benefiting from the provision? (e.g. Abecedarian)
- White middle class as golden standard?

What shall we compare?

- Who gets to say what desirable outcomes are?
- How can migrant/poor families express their needs?

What to evaluate?

Impact (> outcomes)

- What was the meaning of this program for diverse parents?
- Did the project have unintended side-effects on other stakeholders?
- What is the policy impact?

Who shall be involved?

- Who are the stakeholders that can report on impact?

What counts as impact?

- How to distinguish structure, agency and other influences

What to evaluate?

Process

- Why did this project reach these goals?
- What are the critical success factor?

Who shall be involved?

- Who are the stakeholders that can report on processes?

Why to evaluate? (whom does it serve?)

To determine funding policies

- In periods of austerity it matters even more to invest in what works
- Yet the relation between research and funding can also be problematic:
 - Funding provision based on outcomes might lead to selection of input
 - Funding what is known might be in tension with innovation and local variation

Why to evaluate? (whom does it serve?)

To determine funding policies

To scale up programs

- We need to know why a program works, what are critical success factors
- We need to distinguish the global and the local
- Hence the need to combine outcome AND process research

To enhance quality

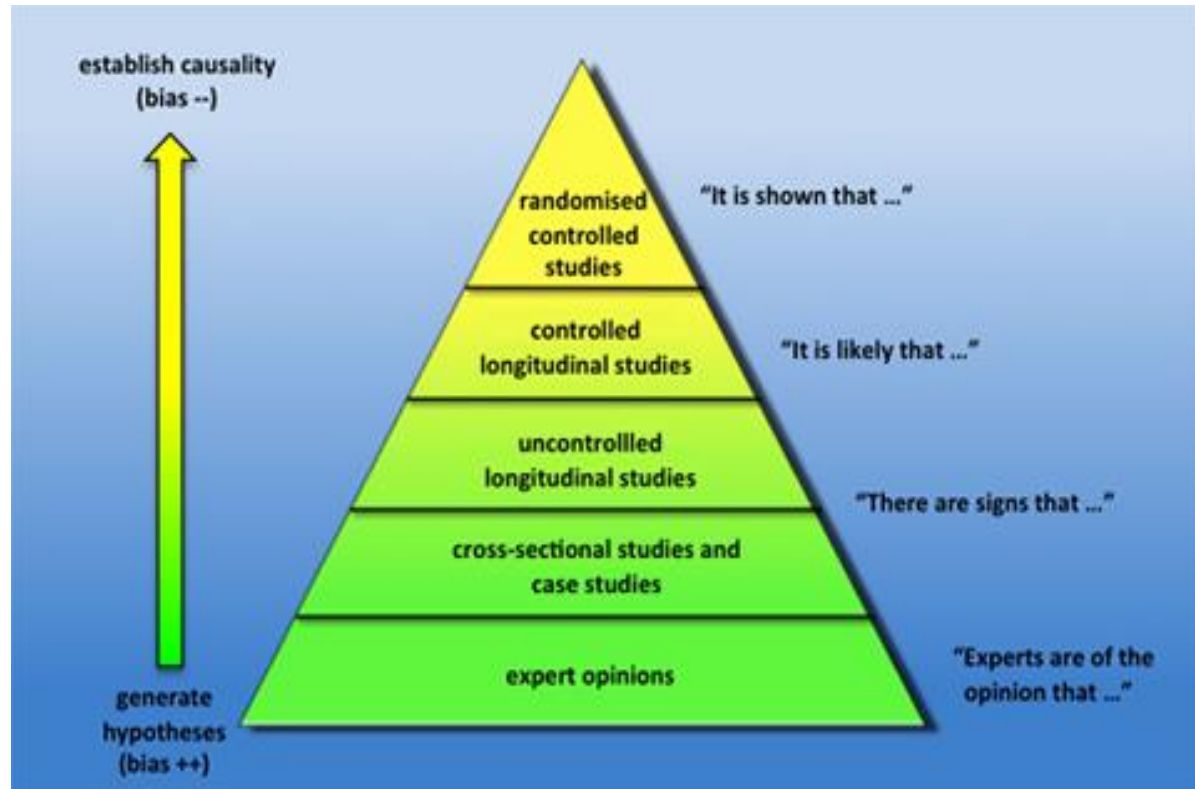
- Monitoring quality has positive effects on quality
- Hence a need for self-evaluation combined with reflection

To assess impact

- Including to evaluate access, with special attention for groups at risk of exclusion
- Hence a need for effect studies



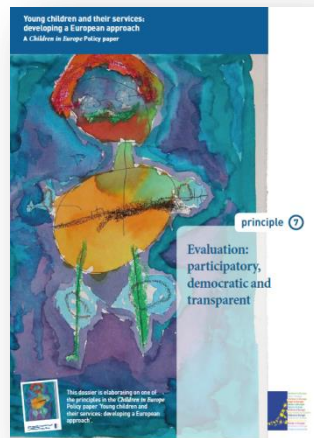
How to evaluate (what counts as valid)?



How to evaluate

Some tensions to take into account

- The need to determine causality and the effects of excluding co-morbidity
- The wish to have control groups and the ethical problem of exclusion
- The cost-effectiveness and the possibility to evaluate long term interventions
- Standardisation and diversity
- The need to determine outcomes and a participative approach to evaluation



<http://www.vbjk.be/en/node/4100>

How to evaluate

Some extra challenges for evaluation with/on families in poverty and migrant families

- The issue of cultural bias in tests

where we **STAND**
naeyc

on assessing young English language learners

The dramatic increase in cultural and linguistic diversity among children and families in early childhood programs requires urgent attention. One of the most pressing needs is to improve assessment practices for young English language learners.

All young children have the right to be assessed in ways that support their learning and development. For children whose home language is not English, this means being assessed in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. A number of obstacles cause assessment practices and policies for these children to be ineffective; foremost are the lack of appropriate assessment tools and the scarcity of well prepared bilingual, bicultural practitioners.

The following recommendations, with specific indicators of effective practice, are intended to help policy makers, program administrators, teachers, and others improve screening and assessment practices for young English language learners.

Recommendations and indicators

- Using screening and assessment for appropriate purposes**

As with assessment of all young children, assessment of young English language learners should be guided by specific, beneficial purposes, with appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of children whose home language is not English.

 - Young English language learners are regularly screened using linguistically and culturally appropriate screening tools. Results of screenings are used to determine what further supports and services are needed.
 - Assessments of young English language learners are used primarily to understand and improve children's learning; to track, monitor, and support development in all areas, including language development; and to identify disabilities or other special needs.
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments**

In assessing young English language learners, great emphasis should be given to the alignment of assessment tools and procedures with the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the children being assessed.

 - All screenings and assessments used with young English language learners are culturally appropriate.
 - All screenings and assessments used with young English language learners are linguistically appropriate.
 - Translations of English language instruments are carefully reviewed for linguistic and cultural appropriateness by native speakers well versed in the complex issues of assessment and translation.
- Significant assessment decisions involve two or more professionals**

The primary purpose of assessing young English language learners should be to help programs support their learning and development; classroom-based assessment should maximize the value of the results for teachers' curriculum planning and teaching strategies.

 - Programs rely on systematic observational assessments, using culturally and linguistically appropriate tools as the primary source of guidance to inform instruction and to improve outcomes for young English language learners.

Projections indicate that by 2030, 40 percent of school-age children will have a home language other than English.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

How to evaluate

Some extra challenges for evaluation with/on families in poverty and migrant families

- The issue of cultural bias in tests
- Can immigrant and poor parents speak (Tobin, 2009)?
 - Unfamiliarity with the task and conventions
 - Discomfort in an educational setting
 - Language barriers (including the fear of being considered banal or stupid)
 - Lack of trust to express complaints or suggestions
 - Fatalism
 - Social isolation and economic stress hindering planning and participation at meetings
 - 'Respect' and deference for teachers and researchers

Conclusion

Just-when-I-think-I've-got-everything-figured-out-
some-jerk-asks-basic-questions-phobia



- There is no straightforward hierarchy of methods
- How to evaluate depends of **what** to evaluate
- What to evaluate depends of **why** to evaluate
- Between science and policy stand opinions on what the good life is (and luckily so)