

Necessary Conditions for First Things First Evaluations

Most of the evaluation approaches under discussion by the Panel require a number of conditions before they can be effectively launched. Below is a listing of the items, to this point, that we understand the Panel has identified as necessary conditions for a successful FTF evaluation approach. FTF has in place, or is working to put in place, the following conditions. The Advisory Panel will weigh in on these and modify this list so that it is as comprehensive as needed for conducting the kinds of studies being recommended to the FTF Board.

1. Complete and carefully vetted logic model that shows the key FTF strategies, models, programs, and other activities that FTF expects to produce the desired outcomes.
2. Clear criteria for selecting strategies to be studied.
3. Clear criteria for selecting samples for studies that require sampling.
4. Operational definitions of key terms in the logic model and in the evaluation questions, for example, FTF will define:
 - a. Fidelity of implementation for each strategy, program, or model to be studied.
 - b. What constitutes “full” implementation for each strategy, program, or model to be studied.
 - c. How dosage is to be define and measured.
 - d. How service intensity is to be defined and measured.
5. Comprehensive, statewide, integrated, and longitudinal data system with:
 - a. Descriptions of all variables in the system
 - b. Description of how variables or data points across different parts of the system (e.g., health and education) can be interconnected
 - c. Unique child and family identifiers that are consistent across different parts of the system (e.g., the same ID in health and in education data)
 - d. Administrative data for all strategies funded by FTF
6. Reliable and valid measures of the key outcomes, especially the 10 readiness indicators, for example:
 - a. A measure of school readiness at kindergarten entry that tap the five domains identified by the national education goals panel.
7. Planning, partnership, and collaboration among FTF stakeholders in using information technology for decision making related to continuous program improvement in each strategy area with annual funding greater than \$2 million.
8. Dissemination of information for use by varied stakeholders and constituencies through such means as publicly available data sets, a statewide data center, or digital community asset mapping.