

Outcome Based Evaluation Explained

Outcome based evaluation is as much about planning programs as it is evaluating them. In fact, some people actually call it outcome based planning and evaluation.

Outcome based evaluation asks the question “How did my library program or service change the skills, behaviors, attitudes, or knowledge of the people who participated or used it?” and answers that question with evidence showing how many people changed as a result of participating in your library program.

Outcome based evaluation step-by-step guide, with examples in italics:

1. What is a problem in your community that your library can help solve?
The achievement gap is really big in our community because families can't afford to enroll their kids in summer programs.
2. Who needs to change to solve this problem?
Economically underserved kids and their families.
3. How do they need to change to solve this problem?
Economically underserved kids need to maintain their reading skills during summer vacation from school and their families need to do more to help their kids access book, talk about books, and develop a reading habit.
4. What do you know that can help them make this change? Use research and your past experiences to answer this question.
 - *Research shows that youth who read 5-10 books over the summer maintain their reading skills.*
 - *Research shows that youth who have a regular reading habit maintain or improve their reading skills.*
 - *Research shows that youth who read an average of 20 minutes a day have better vocabulary skills, thus maintain or improve their reading skills over the summer.*
 - *Youth who associate books, stories, and learning with fun are intrinsically motivated to read.*
 - *Youth who get to choose what and when they read enjoy reading more.*
 - *Young children learn best through adult-child interactions.*
 - *Parents are the first and most important teacher of their children and teens.*
 - *Economically underserved kids aren't coming to the library*
 - *Economically underserved families are too busy and/or stressed out to help their kids more.*
5. Based on what you know (i.e. your answers to #4), what materials, activities, programs, events, and/or services can your library implement to help them make the change?
Next summer I will partner with the free summer food program to bring summer reading to economically underserved kids. This partnership will include:

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- *Visiting the summer food site once every-other week for six weeks to develop a relationship with food site staff/volunteers, collect new sign-ups, rotate the deposit collection of books, and make sure they have everything they need and everything is running smoothly.*
 - *Training food site staff/volunteers how to sign kids up for summer reading, distribute reading logs, help kids keep track of their reading on their log once a week, distribute prizes, and do the evaluation.*
 - *Working with food site staff/volunteers to develop a routine for the kids to read independently or listen to books every day at their site.*
 - *Working with food site staff/volunteers to plan 6 literacy-based fun activities that get the kids and adults engaging with each other once a week.*
 - *Creating 3 deposit collections of library books that can stay at the summer food site which I will rotate every-other week for 6 weeks so kids have diverse reading material to choose from and have something to read while they are there.*
6. How will you know whether or not they are making the change by participating in your program?
- *Observations documented with photos will indicate whether or not most kids had fun engaging in literacy activities.*
 - *Informal interviews with 2-3 adults after each program will indicate whether or not adults are engaging with kids in the weekly literacy activities.*
 - *Survey results indicate the number and percent of kids who maintained or improved their reading skills as a result of participating in summer reading.*
 - *Survey results indicate the number and percent of kids who developed a reading habit as a result of participating in summer reading.*
7. Did they make the change? Share your results with your city council, library board, and other key stakeholders.
- *Most of the kids in most of the photos are smiling, laughing, huddled around a book, or focused on listening, reading, and/or the activity which indicates they were engaged and had fun. Lots of kids weren't paying attention during one activity which indicates they weren't having fun so we will make adaptations to improve that activity or just not do it next summer.*
 - *Summer food site staff/volunteers had 6 activities and after each asked three adults these questions; 1) What did your child learn or enjoy most today, and 2) how did your child do during the activity today. 10 out of the 18 adults were able to quickly and easily answer the first question which indicated they were engaged with their child during the activity so knew the answer. Answers to the second question didn't turn out to be a good indicator because most people answered "great" and we knew that wasn't always true so we will ask a different question to ask next summer.*
 - *45 surveys were distributed to the adults with children who turned in completed reading logs and 15 of them were completed and returned (33% return rate). 90% of the adults of children who completed their reading logs said their child maintained or improved their reading skills over the summer and 75% said their child developed a reading habit.*