

How to Design a Child Impact Assessment Initiative That Best Fits Your Community



Key Decisions to Design Your Child Impact Assessment

Child impact assessment initiatives can be designed in different ways. Here are the decisions community leaders will want to make—along with possible actions to operationalize these decisions. The actions are posed as questions because they involve choices. But *for most of the decisions, taking multiple actions will strengthen the effort.*

1

BUY-IN: How will your initiative achieve maximum buy-in, credibility, and sustainability?

- Involve key stakeholders?
- Place the function in the best-suited “institutional home”?
- Engage relevant agencies across government?
- Align this effort with related strategies—such as a children’s budget—that reinforce a focus on children?
- Build or strengthen a support base in the community?

2

FOCUS: Which policy decisions will be the focus of the assessments?

- Areas not usually associated with children but with clear implications for them, such as zoning, transportation, housing, or infrastructure?
- Decisions with obvious consequences for children like health, mental health, human services, and the environment?
- Areas of need where the greatest racial and ethnic disparities exist?
- All proposals in the chosen area of focus or only some?

3

RACIAL EQUITY: Will your effort include a particular focus on achieving racial equity goals for children?

If so, the additional child equity questions at the end of Kids Impact’s Starter Guide (<http://bit.ly/Using-CIAs>) can help you examine in greater depth the racial and ethnic impacts of proposals on children and on the structures that influence their well-being.

4

GUIDEPOSTS: What guideposts will you use to assess impact?

- Community goals for child well-being, with specific objectives?
- Reduction in disparities among children?
- Local bill of rights for children?
- Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (<https://www.unicef.org/armenia/en/stories/four-principles-convention-rights-child>)

5

STAFFING & FUNDING: How will the assessments be conducted, staffed, and funded?

- Build the analysis function into the ongoing work of government staff in agencies that administer the policies?
- Partner with philanthropy, university, or nonprofit?
- Build the analysis function into government offices that specialize in research and analysis (such as a legislative analyst office or research bureau)?
- Secure funding, if needed, from government resources or philanthropy?

Key Decisions (continued)

6

STREAMLINED PROCESS: How will you ensure the procedures are streamlined enough to be workable and well-accepted?

- Develop them with a small team of people, including staff who are expected to use the procedures?
- Review and evaluate the procedures at regular intervals and make adjustments accordingly?

7

TRAINING & SUPPORT: How will staff conducting the assessments be trained initially and provided ongoing support related to how available data is used, how policies affect racial equity, and other relevant areas of concern?

- Training and support through an appropriate government office?
- Training and support from a university, philanthropy, or independent contractor?

8

YOUTH VOICE: How will you gather input from youth and keep young people as well as the larger community up to date on what's happening with child impact assessments?

- Having one or more seats at the table for youth as the project is planned?
- Having a local youth council provide input as child impact assessments are conducted?
- Having youth ambassadors/advisors who provide feedback to project leaders on a regular basis?
- Using media/social media platforms to keep other youth and the public up to date on what's happening with child impact assessments?

9

REPORTING OUT: When and how will findings from the assessments be shared with policymakers and the public?

- Complete them before the relevant decision-making body meets to decide on the proposal?
- Post assessments on the decision-making body's website at least 48 hours before the decision will be taken up?
- Use plain language the public can easily understand?
- Share the information in languages spoken in the community?

10

USE OF FINDINGS: How will you ensure the findings are used in decision-making?

- Include the assessment in the standard file that decision-makers routinely receive on proposals?
- Educate residents on the availability of the assessments so they can share their feedback with elected representatives and key officials?
- Designate an outside entity to analyze the extent to which policymaker decisions address findings in the assessments?