



Checklist For Evaluating Government Policy

Who We Are

Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) is a leading, non-profit, social service agency that has been serving the community since 1914.

Our Mission

The mission of Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) is to ***Promote Strengthened Individuals and Families in Just and Supportive Communities.*** Our priority is to serve those who lack access to family support services because of discrimination based on ethnicity, language, race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or other barriers such as lack of income.

Who We Serve and What We Do

FSA serves over 20,000 mostly low-income individuals and families in the Toronto area each year. We provide a variety of counselling and community support programs for individuals and families.

FSA's Definition of FAMILY

A FAMILY consists of two or more people, whether living together or apart, who are related by blood, marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another.

How to Use the Checklist

This *Checklist* is a tool to assist individuals and community groups evaluate proposed government policies. The goals against which policies are evaluated reflect the values of FSA. They are:

- **the promotion of just and supportive communities**
- **the strengthening of individuals and families**
- **the promotion of shared societal and family responsibility for the care of children**
- **the advancement of individual development and protection of individual rights.**

Questions about the proposed policy are grouped according to these four goals. Each question should be considered carefully. If it is relevant to the policy being evaluated, a judgement should be made as to whether the policy addresses the question in

- a strong, positive manner (**High**);
- a neutral manner that is neither strong nor weak (**Medium**);
- a weak manner (**Low**); or
- a clearly negative or inappropriate manner (**Inadequate**).

It is also possible that a judgement cannot be made because there is not enough information or it does not apply (**N/A**). Notes explaining your judgements can be recorded at the bottom of each **section**.

After each question has been considered, add up the number of **High**, **Medium**, **Low**, **Inadequate** or **N/A** judgements for each of the four goals in the Summary section at the end of the *Checklist*. This will provide an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed policy.

GOAL: To Promote Just & Supportive communities

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
1.1 ENSURE that all people have access to appropriate support from society, including safe and affordable shelter, food, health care, income security, clothing and basic education?					
1.2 ENCOURAGE opportunities for people to be involved in their communities in caring ways?					
1.3 ENCOURAGE self-reliance and mutual support through the formation of self-help groups?					
1.4 PROMOTE mutually-supportive and inclusive communities?					
1.5 PROVIDE for community involvement in the ongoing planning of services to ensure that they are appropriate?					
1.6 INVOLVE volunteers to provide support to others when appropriate?					
1.7 ENSURE equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities?					
Summary					

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
2.1 RESPECT cultural and religious traditions?					
2.2 RESPECT racial and ethnic diversity?					
2.3 RESPECT sexual orientation and diversity within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and transsexual communities?					
2.4 RESPECT and ACCOMMODATE physical, mental, and developmental disabilities?					
2.5 ENSURE that no one with a legitimate claim is denied access to the benefits of the policy?					
2.6 PROMOTE a basic range of services and benefits to everyone and offer exceptional services in exceptional circumstances?					
2.7 ENSURE that there is no loss of dignity when an individual or family needs a community-based service (e.g., having to undergo an unfair and demeaning assessment)?					
Summary					

GOAL: To strengthen families and Individuals

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
3.1 RESPECT and ENCOURAGE the development of family units within the context of commitment to caring?					
3.2 RECOGNIZE					
That there are different types of families?					
The legitimacy of lesbian and gay families?					
That individuals have the right to choose services they want?					
3.3 AVOID promoting and fostering a single image of the family (e.g., based on ability, gender or sexual orientation)?					
3.4 PROMOTE mutual support across generations?					
3.5 PROMOTE networks that are based in the communities they serve?					
3.6 FACILITATE families and individuals in obtaining the full range of support they need?					
3.7 PROMOTE shared responsibility in the care and nurture of vulnerable families and individuals?					
Summary					

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
4.1 PREVENT exploitation of unpaid caregivers, the majority of whom are women?					
4.2 INCREASE the ability of families to make decisions on their own behalf?					
4.3 SUPPORT family and individual autonomy by providing just and reasonable alternatives?					
4.4 SUPPORT self-determination and individual rights which may stand in opposition to those of the family?					
4.5 PROVIDE support in the least intrusive manner possible?					
4.6 MAINTAIN the privacy of the family and the individual wherever possible?					
Summary					

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
5.1 RECOGNIZE that it is the responsibility of government to support the strengthening of families and individuals?					
5.2 ENSURE the safety and protection of individuals?					
5.3 PROMOTE and ENHANCE strengths and capacities of families and individuals?					
Summary					

GOAL: To promote the value of shared societal and family responsibility for the care of children

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
6.1 RECOGNIZE the economic and social responsibility of being a parent?					
6.2 EMPHASIZE and PROMOTE prevention and early intervention in order to further the establishment of positive life circumstances and outcomes for children?					
6.3 GUARANTEE safety, adequate physical care, and access to social and educational opportunities for children?					
6.4 SUPPORT children as unique and valued human beings with a right to fulfil their potential?					
6.5 PROMOTE a social environment for children which has nurture, stimulation, and care?					
6.6 ENSURE that children have first call on our country's resources?					
Summary					

GOAL: TO Advance Individual Development and Protect the Rights of Individuals

Does the policy:	High	Medium	Low	Inade-quate	N/A
7.1 FURTHER the ability of people to take responsibility for their lives and achieve their potential?					
7.2 ENSURE gender, racial, and cultural equity?					
7.3 PROMOTE and PROTECT vulnerable individuals					
Economically?					
Socially?					
Physically?					
Summary					

SUMMARY

In summary, does this government policy	High	Medium	Low	Inadequate	N/A
* PROMOTE just and supportive communities?					
* STRENGTHEN families and individuals?					
* RECOGNIZE that the care of children is a shared responsibility of families and of society?					
* ADVANCE individual development and protect the rights of individuals?					

Notes & Comments:

**In one way or another, we are
a part of your life.**

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***“STRENGTHENED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN JUST AND
SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES”***

For more than 80 years, Family Service Association (FSA) has been responding to the needs of the surrounding community. Today we are one of the most diverse and dynamic agencies in Canada.

We provide a variety of counselling and community support programs to individuals and families struggling to cope with issues such as depression, physical abuse, sexual orientation, marital problems, developmental disabilities, child and family poverty, housing and resettlement, and the challenges of growing older. We also monitor and analyze public policies that are relevant to our work.

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