

# Adopting an innovative approach for analyzing the needs of children and their families

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**Since 2008, in the province of Québec, Canada, the Inter-agency Partnership for Child Development and Safety Project\* has provided support to practitioners in two youth protection centers and four prevention centers in the implementation of an innovative intervention approach for improving collaboration between parents, practitioners, and various partners concerned in the well-being and safety of 100 children aged nine years and younger presenting complex needs.**

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# **The intervention approach consists of:**

- **a complete analysis of the child's developmental needs using a common reference framework**
- **the collection and analysis of information pertaining to elements of the reference framework using a practical analytical tool**
- **the participation of the parents and the partners in the needs analysis**
- **the creation of an action plan**

**The project promoters and the organizations formed co-development groups to look at the following questions:**

- What intervention challenges would face the practitioners?**
- What would facilitate the implementation?**
- What would be the implications for the parents and the practitioners?**

# Co-development groups

- **55 practitioners (social workers, educational psychologists, nurses, criminologists, special educators)**
- **led by 2 liaison officers**
- **39 meetings in total**
- **held every 6 weeks (+/- one year for each practitioner)**
- **two hours in length**
- **four participants on average per meeting**
- **meetings were recorded, verbatims were transcribed, thematic analyses of individual and group reflections were carried out.**

**What  
are the  
challenges?**

**Know  
the  
analytical  
tool**

**Understand  
all elements  
of the  
proposed  
intervention**

**Devote the  
necessary  
time to  
complete  
the tool**

**Integrate  
the proposed  
intervention  
into ongoing  
family  
follow-up**

**Provide a  
dialogue  
space  
for parents  
around  
the child's  
needs**

**Use  
the  
analytical  
tool**

**Encourage  
parents  
to exchange  
with  
partners**

**Involve  
partners in  
the child's  
needs  
analysis**

**Consider:  
family crises,  
characteristics  
of the parents,  
family  
problems**

**Identify  
actions  
related to  
the analysis**

**Manage  
differences  
of opinion  
regarding the  
child's needs**

**Balance the  
organization's  
mandate  
with the  
proposed  
intervention**

# What facilitated the implementation?

<b>Practitioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ confident attitude in using a new tool, given that such tools are not commonly used in practice</li><li>✓ tool is not seen as an additional burden (adopting the tool for one's self and integrating it into one's own practice)</li><li>✓ intervention style and outlook corresponding with that of the project</li><li>✓ openness to involving the parents in the child's needs analysis</li></ul>
<b>Parent and family situation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ introspective abilities of the parents</li><li>✓ little or no crisis situations in the families</li><li>✓ no other serious problems</li></ul>
<b>Practice conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ consistency with the organization's values, principles, and intervention mandates</li><li>✓ ongoing support received by peers and liaison officers in the co-development groups</li></ul>

# What are the implications for the practitioners and the parents?

- The tool structures exchanges with parents;
- Practitioners and parents learn to better identify the child's needs in relation to family and environmental factors;
- Differences in opinions regarding the child's needs are seen as opportunities for exchange and not resistance from parents;
- Use of the tool empowers parents throughout the intervention and facilitates their collaboration in creating an action plan (makes it more meaningful for them)
- The tool facilitates a more personalized transfer of files within and between organizations.



# What have we learned?

- Introduce elements of the intervention one by one;
- Inform and sensitize the partners;
- Link elements of the proposed intervention approach with the practitioners' current practice;
- Provide support to the practitioners;
- Identify an intermediary in the organization who can provide ongoing support throughout the implementation.

**For more information  
about the project:**

**<http://www.initiativeaides.ca/>**