

Prevention in Early Childhood: Sample Key Stakeholder Interview Questions



Key stakeholder interviews can provide vital information about your community, including important context for any quantitative data you may have collected as part of your needs assessment process. They are also a useful way to connect with community members, and to build support for your program efforts.

Key stakeholders may include the following:

- Representatives from the education sector, such as public and pre-school teachers, principals, school administrators, school nurses, and school counselors
- Youth-serving organization personnel
- Social services and early childhood service providers
- Substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery practitioners
- Medical staff from local and regional hospitals, community health centers, health care systems, insurers, dental offices, and pharmacies
- Parents and caregivers*

This resource provides some potential questions to ask key stakeholders. Each main question is accompanied by one or more follow-up questions. Don't expect to cover all of these questions in a single interview; some will be more/less relevant than others. You will want to focus your questions on those areas that are most important to you, and that the stakeholder is best-positioned to answer.

Before you begin, make sure to clarify who you are, what you are doing, and why you are seeking the specific stakeholder's input. Also let stakeholders know, in advance, how long the interview will take, then do your best to stay within that timeframe.

To learn more about key stakeholder interviews, consider taking the free, self-paced online course [Making the Most of Key Informant Interviews](#), available through [Prevention Solutions@EDC](#). Contact your TA liaison if you are interested in participating.

General Questions/Warm-Ups

1. Could you briefly describe your role and your organization?
 - How does your organization serve young children (prenatal – 11 years) and their parents/caregivers?
 - If your organization doesn't serve young children directly, what is your experience working with this group?

* Some of these questions are not relevant to parents/caregivers, so use your discretion. You may want to consider other ways to gather qualitative data from parents/caregivers, such as through focus groups.

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2. What do think are this community's strengths as they relate to the health and wellbeing of young children?
 - Where is there room for improvement in relation to the health and wellbeing of young children?

Understanding the Issue

3. What is your sense of how many young children in the community are living and/or affected by caretakers or other family members with substance misuse or addiction problems (either treated or untreated)?
 - Does it seem like these numbers have changed over time?
 - Which subpopulations in the community seem to be most affected (e.g., age groups, gender, race)?
 - What kinds of impacts or effects are you seeing on these young children (e.g., what kinds of behaviors are they exhibiting)?
 - What kinds of effects are you seeing on the people/systems who interact with these children?
4. What are the challenges you/your organization experience addressing the needs of these young children?
5. How much do you think the general public understands about the impact on children of having parents/caregivers with a history of substance misuse and/or addiction?

Available Data

6. What types of data does your organization collect that might help to inform our efforts to prevent future substance misuse and related health and behavioral health issues among young children?
These could be related to the nature of the issue or the consequences of it.
 - How do you collect these data? How often?
 - Has the COVID-19 pandemic interfered with data collection efforts? If so, how?
 - Aside from COVID-19, what challenges have you experienced collecting these data?
 - Are there any problems with these data?
7. How might we obtain permission to access these data?

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Assessing Readiness to Engage in Prevention Efforts

7. How would you describe your organization's level of understanding of these issues and/or the root causes of the behaviors you are seeing?
8. How ready is your organization to address the impact on children of substance misuse and/or addiction among their parents/caregivers? In other words:
 - How interested are leadership/staff in addressing the issue?
 - Does your organization have the resources/bandwidth to address this issue right now?
 - What factors would facilitate this work?
 - What factors might undermine or complicate this work?
9. How ready do you think others in the community are to address this issue?
 - Who are the leaders or champions of this issue?
 - What factors would facilitate/complicate this work?

Interventions for Children

10. What steps has your organization taken to address the impact on children of substance misuse and/or addiction among parents/caregivers?
 - How well have these efforts worked?
11. Has your organization provided training on supporting children affected by parents/caregivers with a history of substance misuse and/or addiction?
 - If so, what types of training have been provided?
 - Is this training for all staff or just certain staff?
12. Has your organization collaborated with any other agencies or organizations in the community on this work?
 - [If so], with which organization(s) have you worked, and how did it go?
12. Are there other organizations in the community that are addressing the effects on children with parents/caregivers with a history of substance misuse and/or addiction? If yes:
 - Which other organizations are engaged in this work?
 - How are they addressing the impact (types of interventions, populations centered)?

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- How effective have these efforts been?
- How do you know about these efforts?

13. How are K-5 schools in the community addressing substance misuse prevention?

- Is substance misuse prevention education part of the schools' curriculum? If so, what does it entail?
- Are there any school-wide policies that address substance use? What are they?
- Are there any school-community partnerships? With whom?
- Do you believe these efforts are effective?

14. Do organizations in your community have any mechanisms in place for identifying and assisting students with parents/caregivers who have a history of substance misuse and addiction?

- What do these mechanisms entail?
- Do you think they are effective?

Prompts for other organizations might include: schools, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious/fraternal organizations.

Interventions for Parents/Caregivers

15. Are there any school- or community-based treatment/recovery services or other resources available for parents/caregivers with substance use and/or addiction problems?

- Who provides these resources?
- How can parents/caregivers obtain them?
- How are parents/caregivers made aware of these resources?

Interventions: General

16. What additional actions do you think should be taken to address the impact on children of substance misuse and/or addiction among parents/caregivers in the community?

Closing: Additional Comments, Observations, or Questions

17. What other individuals—either within or outside your organization—would it be helpful for us to talk to about these issues?
18. Do you have any other comments or observations you would like to make?
19. Do you have any questions for me?