

CAST-5 À La Carte

CAST-5 is designed to be used flexibly to meet varying needs. It can be used in full, or individual components can be selected. The assessment can be carried out at the level of the governmental MCH system (including non-Title V partners), the level of the Title V program, or the individual program area level. Each state will need to determine the best combination of approaches for its program, given staff availability, competing demands on the program (e.g., whether or not the state legislature is in session, whether the MCHB Block Grant 5-Year Needs Assessment is soon due), and so forth. Those designing a CAST-5 process will want to consider breadth of perspectives desired, the implications of various options for integration of ideas, the timeframe available and/or specific timing goals, as well as other management and resource parameters.

Variations		Pros	Cons
Scope	All Essential Services Simultaneously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best way to get the “big picture” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • High level of Staff Commitment
	Selected Subset(s) of Essential Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More manageable organizational/management burden • May be a more efficient way of focusing on an essential service/functional area already deemed a priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May leave gaps in assessment • May be difficult to determine which essential services to focus on without prior planning
Depth	All Tool Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to assure that the end result includes concrete steps to address identified problem areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large commitment of time and personnel
	Selected Tool Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using only the process indicators in conjunction with a detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and needs can provide a useful framework for thinking about current program function and desired program directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still need to make sure that an action plan is developed to ensure productivity and closure -- this may be easier if the capacity needs tools are used
Output	One Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sense of the “big picture” • Reduces redundancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on scope, depth and timeframe, participants may desire a more immediate sense of closure at each step in the assessment process
	Separate Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide more immediate sense of next steps to take • May be easier to manage in smaller “chunks” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If many essential services are assessed, developing multiple action plans may be prohibitively time consuming • Generating multiple plans effectively bypasses important synthesizing steps in the CAST-5 process that highlight overarching themes, which may lead to disjointed action steps and unnecessary redundancy

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Timeframe	Compressed <i>(e.g., retreat, series of meetings)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assures that momentum, collective knowledge of the process, and discussions are not lost due to time away from the process May be necessary to achieve desired results at appropriate time for funding, political, program or other purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAST-5 involves intensive discussions and deliberations, and team members may fatigue quickly “Burn out” could result in an overall negative experience as opposed to the desired team- or program-building The group may risk not being able to complete the full process in the allotted time period
	Extended <i>(e.g., series of meetings over several months)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows more time for richer discussions, and involvement of more perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants may lose interest Program context could change in ways that affect assessment results
Participants	All MCH/CSHCN Program Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters sense of team- and program-building More efficient overall than doing separately if all units are planning to participate at some point within the same timeframe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More difficult to schedule Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious
	Selected Program Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be done more quickly/efficiently Can go through process on a specific issue Can be done regardless of rest of Title V program’s ability to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May miss out on leveraging complementary efforts that may be taking place concurrently in other program units
	Program Management Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps authorized decision makers highly involved and informed, which may assure an effective process and outcome Reduces complexity of task and streamlines discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have less effective implementation of action plan by staff
	Broad Staff Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could enhance quality of discussions and assure a thorough capacity assessment CAST-5 process could serve as an educational or staff development strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More difficult to schedule Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious Staff may be reticent to express themselves freely in presence of supervisors
	Internal Program Personnel Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simpler process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for only “party-line” perspectives
	Including External Partners <i>(within government or from the community)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could help build support for and coordination with Title V Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More difficult to schedule Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious
Grouping	One Assessment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases consistency of results Increases facility using CAST-5 tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May increase the likelihood of “burnout”
	Small Workgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for inclusion of a greater number of staff members and perspectives Potentially greater “buy in” to carry out action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More advance preparation needed Potentially more difficult to schedule meetings