

5 Whys Root Cause Analysis Worksheet

Intended use: To help your collaboration identify root causes of a community problem. Note: Many issues may have multiple root causes; if so, it may be useful to complete this worksheet multiple times.

Instructions: 1. State an issue. 2. Start by asking why the issue is happening. 3. Continue asking “why?” in response to each suggested cause. 4. Ask “why?” as many times as necessary in order to get insight at a level that can be addressed. (You may have to ask more than five whys.) 5. You will know you have reached your root cause when it does not make sense to ask “why?” again.

Issue:

Why is this happening?

1.

Why is
that?

2.

Why is
that?

3.

Why is
that?

4.

Why is
that?

5.

Caution:

- Avoid blaming children and families; instead, focus on how the system is not meeting the needs of children and families.
- If your last answer is something you cannot control, go back up to the previous answer.
- The root cause cannot be a person.

Remember:

- You do not want to list five *different* reasons; you want to delve into one reason per worksheet.
- Do a logic check when you get to a root cause.

What *specifically* would need to change in order to resolve this issue?