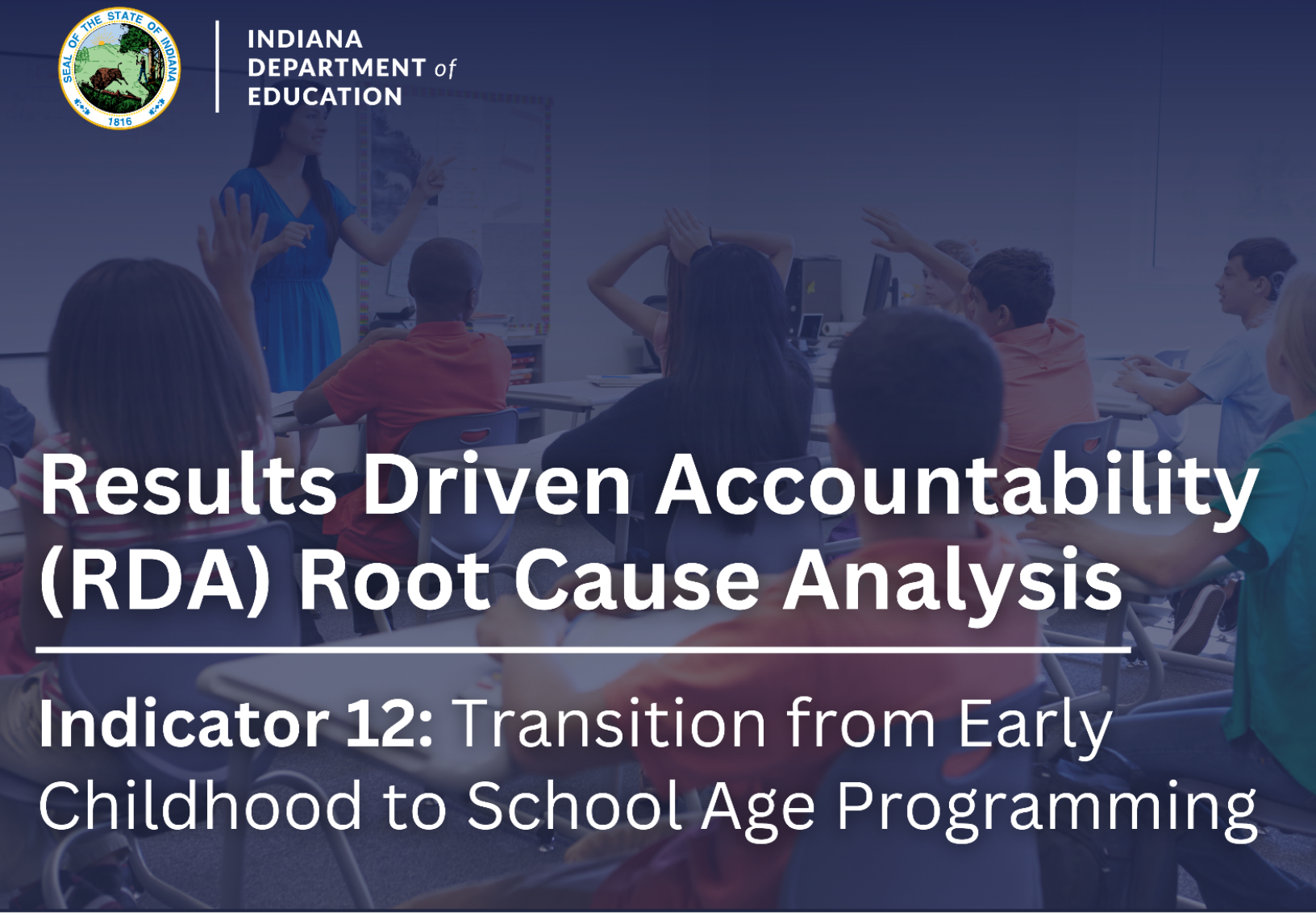
INDIANA DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION



Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Root Cause Analysis

Indicator 12: Transition from Early Childhood to School Age Programming

Indiana Department of Education
Office of Special Education

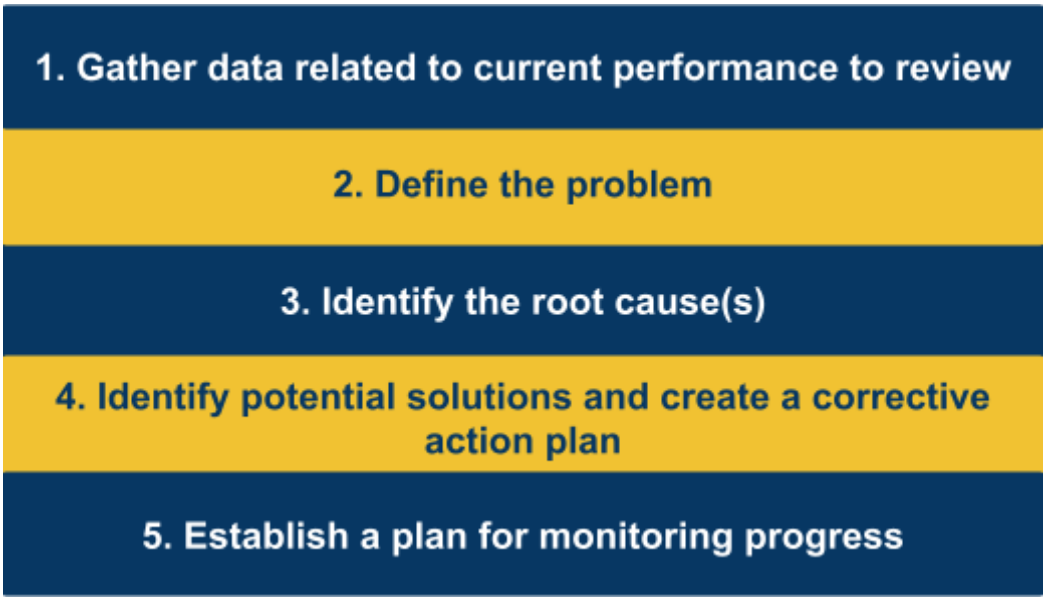
Indicator 12: Transition from Early Childhood (First Steps) to School Age Programming

Definition

Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age three, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an individualized education program (IEP) developed and implemented by their third birthday (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)).

This root cause analysis form aims to help districts analyze their policies, practices, and procedures related to timely evaluations for students transitioning from Part C to Part B special education services by their third birthday. Root cause analysis seeks to understand why problems are happening and create a plan that will address those root causes and remove barriers to student learning.

Root cause analysis and subsequent planning and implementation of corrective action is intended to be performed using a team approach. The steps for in depth root cause analysis, and subsequent corrective action and monitoring, are included below:



Step 1: Gather Data Related to Current Performance to Review

Data sources to consider:

- Date of referral from First Steps
- Parental consent date
- Early childhood data
- Evaluation data

Policy and Procedure Review:

- Transition coordination between First Steps and school corporation
- Policies to include the public agency's participation in transition planning conferences convened by the Part C service coordinator, with the approval of the parent of the child
- Process for transmitting to the school corporation the most recent individualized family service plan (IFSP), family service plan report, and evaluation reports, with parent permission, at least six (6) months prior to the student's third birthday
- Procedures for determining extended school year services for those students who require it
- Assessment for school-age programming
- Handbook or procedural guide that includes district-level processes and procedures to include early childhood transition requirements
- Policies regarding documentation of notification, referral, consent, evaluation, and the start of services
- Process for communicating/scheduling evaluations with parents after notification from First Steps
- Process which ensures evaluation and services start date before third birthday
- Policies accounting for potential delays in evaluation/start date (i.e., illness, weather, etc.) to ensure a start date before age 3
- Professional development available for all early childhood special education (ECSE) staff on transition from First Steps expectations
- Process for late (but before the age of 3) referrals

Key Questions:

- What is the process to ensure students are referred prior to 90 days before their third birthday?
- What structures are in place to ensure these processes are adhered to?
- What are the evaluation procedures once a child is referred for a preschool special education evaluation?
- What is the process for acquiring specialty assessors to conduct assessments?
- What are the most common reasons that IEPs were not convened or services not started before a student's third birthday?
- What processes are in place to monitor the timeliness in transition from First Steps to preschool special education programming?
- Is adequate information provided to the guardian(s) at the transition conference (e.g., point of contact and that person's contact information, next steps and all supporting

guidance and documents in the family's preferred language, meeting schedules, etc.) and, if appropriate, parental consent gained at the conference?
- After a transition conference, is an adequate and efficient process in place to address the referral? Has that process been communicated to all involved staff with roles and responsibilities clearly outlined?
- Have the local education agency's (LEA's) evaluation procedures/schedules (i.e., screenings, assessments, meetings) for children transitioning from First Steps been thoroughly reviewed for adequacy and efficiency?
- For children transitioning from First Steps, are procedures in place to ensure that eligibility is determined by the third birthday?
- For children who are transitioning from First Steps who *are* eligible for Part B, are procedures in effect to ensure that the IEP is developed and implemented on or before the third birthday?
- For children who are transitioning from First Steps who *are not* eligible for Part B, are procedures in effect to ensure the parent is notified of ineligibility prior to the child's third birthday?
- Have procedures related to timely transition, along with staff roles and responsibilities, been clearly communicated to all involved?
- Are summer/school breaks addressed in a manner that ensures that evaluation timelines are met?
- Do you have a process that builds in margin and plans for potential delays due to various circumstances (e.g., parents, weather, illness, etc.) while still meeting the third birthday requirement?
- Is the training on the transition process, including timelines and responsibilities, adequate and provided to all staff involved?
- For children transitioning from First Steps who did not have an IEP in place on or before their third birthday, is there a concerted effort to put the IEP into place as quickly as reasonably possible? Are those efforts tracked and properly coded by the LEA?
- Does the LEA have a process to ensure late referrals are prioritized and processed as quickly as reasonably possible, and that documentation is maintained on each late referral?
- What early childhood transition training is provided to all early childhood special education staff?

Step 2: Define the Problem

After reviewing data, the team will create a 1-2 sentence statement that includes information about the problem. The problem statement should include information about actual impact and potential impact of the problem and should cite specific data. Be as clear and specific as possible.

Example: Across the 2020-2021 school year, School A has 5% of preschool transition evaluations not held within the required evaluation timeline.

Step 3: Identify the Root Cause(s)

A root cause is the primary or initiating factor that leads to an outcome, in this case, a lack of timeliness in evaluating and beginning services for preschoolers transitioning from First Steps into preschool special education services. By understanding the root cause(s) of this issue, it will allow districts to focus on addressing the root causes that lead to the problem, not just the symptoms of the problem. Identifying the root cause requires that we dig deep into the issue and focus on why and how a problem is occurring.

Listed below are two tools (fishbone diagram, 5 Whys) that can be used to conduct a root cause analysis. Please select one to complete in your root cause analysis and attach it with your submission of your corrective action plan.

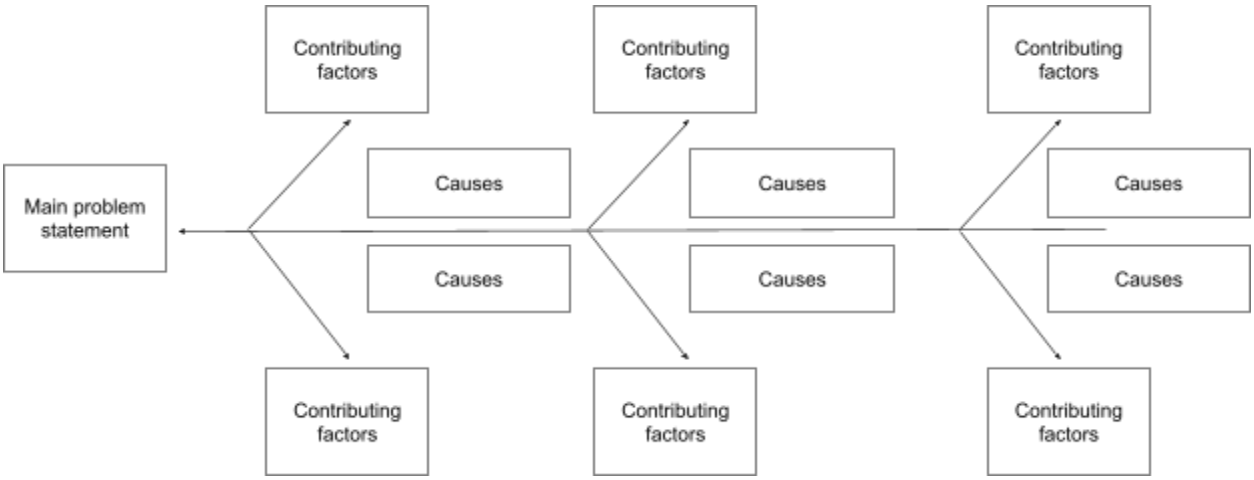
Verify the Root Cause - Essential Questions

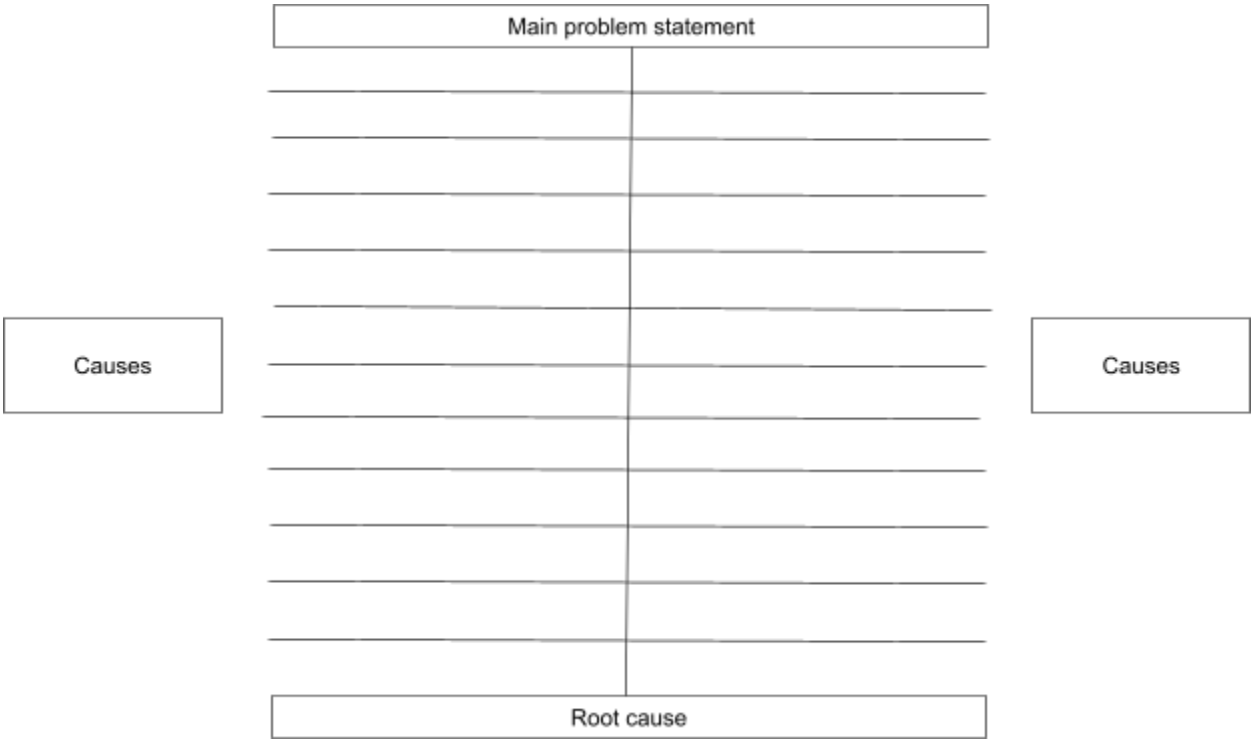
Once you have identified what you believe to be the root cause, it's important to confirm:

1. Did multiple data sources support the identification of this root cause?
2. Does the data support that this cause contributed to the problem?
3. Can anything else, besides this cause, lead to the problem?
4. Is this root cause within the school's control?
5. Are there actionable steps we can take to address the root cause?
6. Will correction of the cause lead to the problem no longer occurring?
7. Will elimination of this cause change the outcome?

Fishbone Diagrams

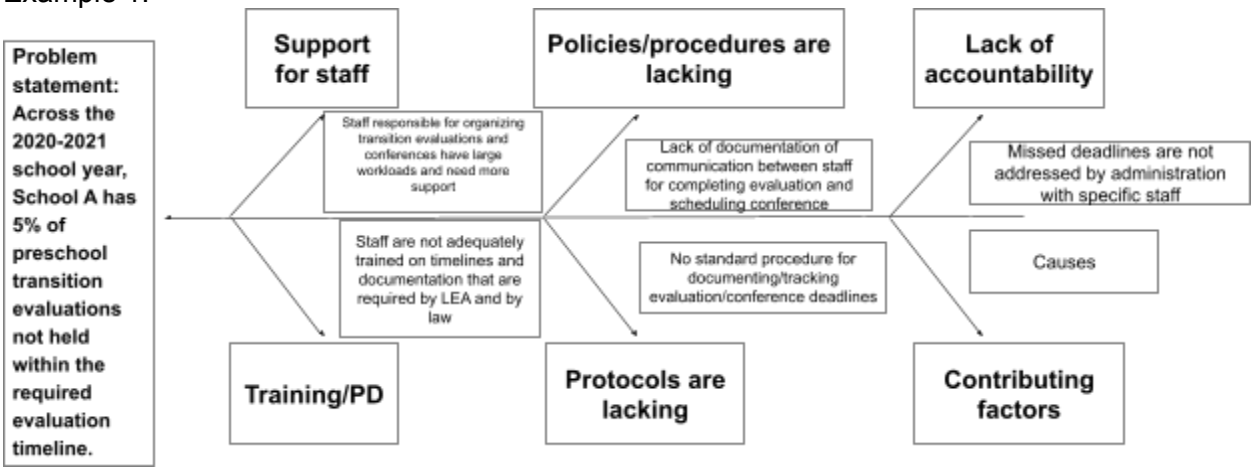
A Fishbone Diagram is a chart that can help better understand the contributing factors and causes of a problem. Starting with the problem allows us to break down the factors that contribute to the problem and consider the causes of each factor. Work as a team to brainstorm causes by asking “why does this happen,” and write ideas with their related category. Continue to ask “why” and understand deeper levels of causes. Look for patterns or similarities that can be grouped together.



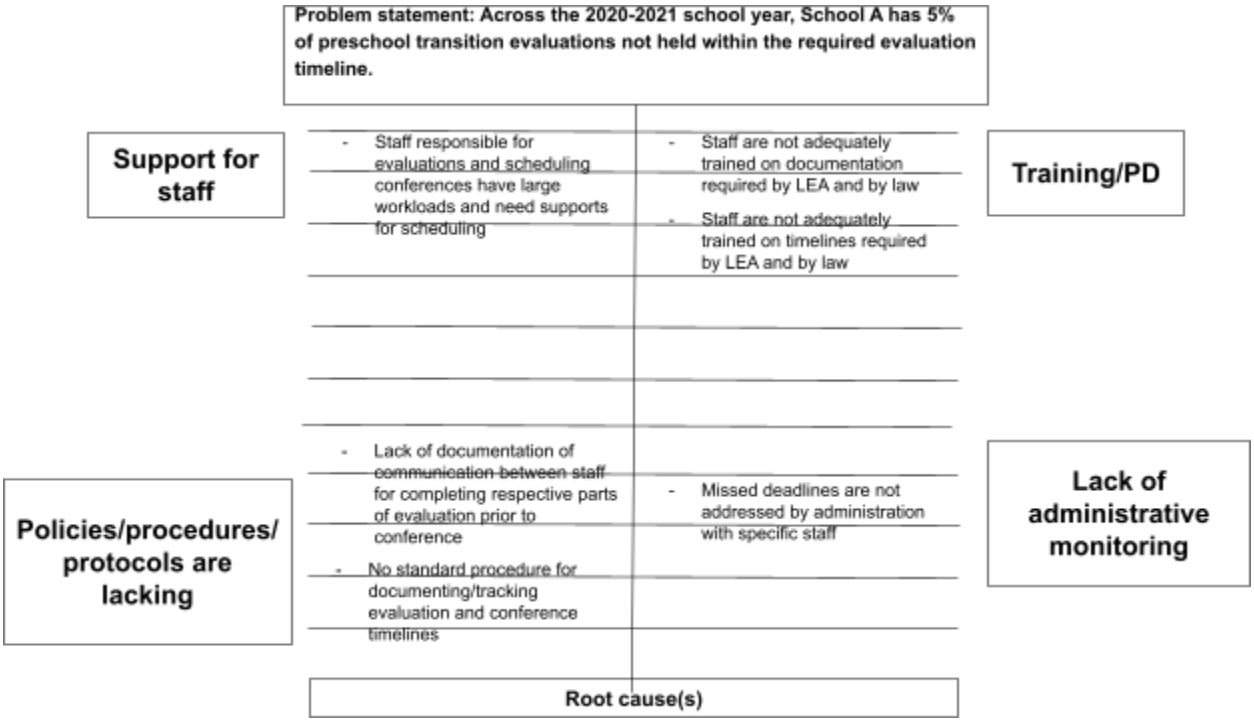


Fishbone Diagram Examples

Example 1:

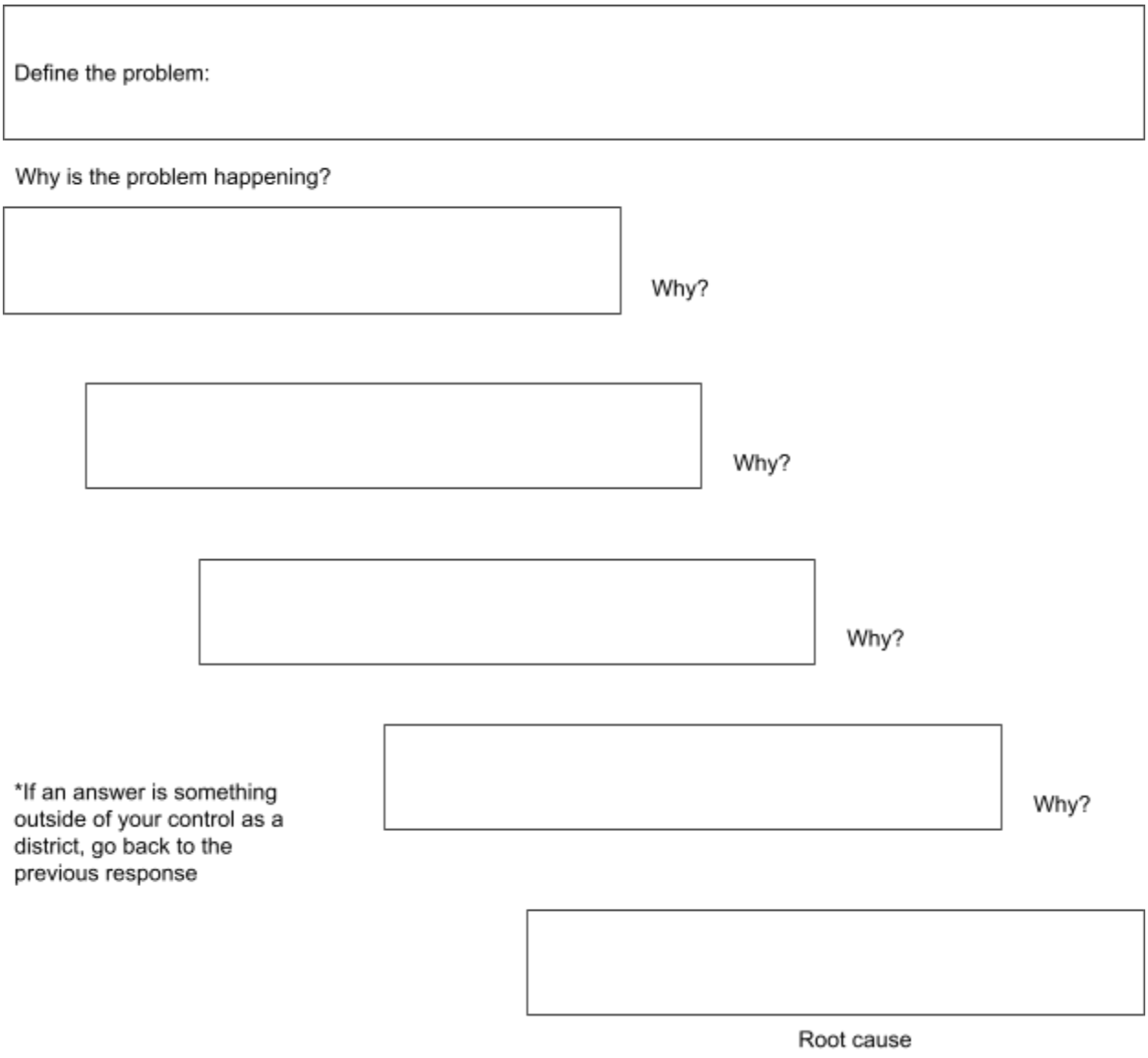


Example 2:



The Five Whys

The goal of root cause analysis is to discover the why**.** Asking “why” allows us to look beyond the symptoms of the problem and can lead us to the root cause. Continue asking “why” until the team agrees on the root cause, this may take more than five times of asking “why.” Make sure to focus on causes and factors that are within the district’s control and focus on adult actions.



The Five Whys Example

Define the problem: Across the 2020-2021 school year, School A has 5% of preschool transition evaluations not held within the required evaluation timeline.

Why is the problem happening?

The required components of the evaluations aren't completed soon enough to write the report and communicate with parents to schedule before the deadline

Why?

Staff are unaware of the necessary components they must complete prior to transition conference and the dates they must complete them

Why?

School psychologists who serve as lead evaluators don't have a system to inform other staff of deadlines for their required components. Required components aren't completed

Why?

LEA does not have a standard procedure in place for tracking referrals, assigning staff roles and responsibilities, and monitoring timelines

Why?

*If an answer is something outside of your control as a district, go back to the previous response

The LEA lacks procedures/training for staff on tracking due dates for evaluations and transition conferences

Root cause

Step 4 and 5: Create a Corrective Action Plan and Establish a Plan for Monitoring Progress

The purpose for completing a corrective action plan is to identify actions that the district will take to correct individual findings of noncompliance and ensure there are systems in place for ensuring future compliance. Per Indiana Department of Education guidance, the district must submit verification of correction of noncompliance and evidence of corrective action for future compliance no later than one (1) year from the date of notification of noncompliance.

Directions: A blank copy of the corrective action plan for indicator 12 is located here. Please copy the document and use it for your corrective action plan submission.