



Indiana University  
School of Education



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## Department of Education

Office of Educational Technology (OET)

### *Focus Group Protocol*

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## 1. Introduction

This protocol was developed to provide guidance for facilitators conducting focus groups evaluating the printed and online versions of the Parents' Guide to the Internet.

## 2. Objectives

The focus group will elicit discussion of how parents feel about the newly developed Parents' Guide to the Internet and whether the Parents' Guide effectively communicates information to parents.

## 3. Description of the Participants

There will be 2-4 Focus groups comprised of six to ten parents. The evaluators will assess the participant pool to verify that each of the characteristics summarized in the following table will have at least one participant to represent it:

Gender	Ethnicity	Internet Usage	Education Level	Grade Level of Child
Male	Asian	Less than Once per Week	High School or less	K-5
Female	Hispanic			6-8
	African American	More Frequently	Some College	9-12
	White			

After the participant pool is established, participants will be assigned based on self-reported Internet usage. To the extent possible, parents who use the Internet less than once a week will be grouped together and those that use the Internet more frequently will be in their own group(s). Individual participants with scheduling conflicts may be reassigned to different groups if those conflicts are not resolvable. Thus, the basic strategy is to assign individuals to groups based on self-reported usage to minimize differences in Internet familiarity.

## 4. Description of the Focus Group

The focus groups will be conducted with the following considerations:

- Scope
  - Each focus group will discuss a section of the website/printed material sufficient to provide discussion for approximately one to one-and-a-half hours

- Facilitators
  - Facilitators will be Granato Group personnel that have been trained in facilitation techniques
- Setting
  - Focus groups will be conducted at locations to be determined that are convenient to the parents
  - Participants and facilitator will sit around a large table
- Reference material
  - Participants will be provided a copy of the Parents' Guide approximately one week before the focus group meeting in the form that will be evaluated by that specific group. The section of the material that will be assigned to the specific group will be indicated.
  - A list of potential prompting questions will be provided.
  - Participants will be provided a copy of the section of the Parents' Guide that was assigned to their specific focus group at the beginning of the session.
- Session recording
  - Facilitator and/or facilitators' assistant will take notes of the session
  - Session will be video taped (with participant permission)
  - A back-up audio tape recording will be made.
- Incentive
  - A light meal will be provided immediately prior to the focus group discussion (consistent with ED guidelines and approval).
  - An honorarium of \$50 may be provided to each parent attending as an incentive for attending.

## 5. Scheduling the Focus Group

The focus groups will be held either after normal business hours or on weekends as needed.

## 6. Focus Group Discussion

The following questions will provide the framework for the focus group discussion. While questions that are not listed here may be asked in order to follow up on participant responses, the focus group discussion will center on these main questions. The introduction and debriefing statements will be read to participants. Follow-up questions will be asked, when appropriate, to gather further information.

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to find out your reactions to the Parents' Guide to the Internet. We would like you to share your honest feedback for improvement. Everything that you say here will be kept confidential, and your names and any other identifying information will not be released to anyone that is not on the research team or used in any report based on this discussion.

We have a limited amount of time, so I might have to interrupt from time-to-time to keep things moving. Our experience tells us that we get the best results when all of you participate equally so we ask that each of you use a roughly equal amount of time.

## 7. Potential questions

The following is a pool of potential facilitation questions:

- Opening Question (to get people talking and help them feel comfortable as a group. Ask each person to answer going around the table one by one.)
  - Tell us your name, the ages of your children, and what you enjoy doing most with your children?
- Introductory Question
  - Do you think you would sit down with your child and use the Parents' Guide to the Internet booklet and/or website? If not, why?
- Transition Questions
  - What are the one or two things that you liked best about the Parents' Guide to the Internet?
  - What are the one or two things that you liked least about the Parents' Guide to the Internet?
- Key (Topic) Questions

We asked you to read topics \_\_\_\_\_. We would now like to discuss the specifics of those topics.

- In what ways did these topics of the Parent's Guide effectively provide information regarding the Internet to you as a parent?
  - To what extent did these Parents' Guide chapters improve your understanding of parental issues regarding the Internet?
  - Are there specific sections of these topics that are better or easier to understand than others?
  - Is there anything you would include among the major topics of the booklet and/or website that we left out?
- Ending Questions

We wanted to get your impressions of the Parents' Guide to see if it helped provide effective information about the Internet to you as a parent.

- If you were in charge of designing this booklet/website what are the one or two things you would most likely change?
- Is there anything else about the Parents' Guide booklet or website that you would like to share with us?

### **8. Debriefing by the Facilitator**

I would like to thank you for your participation. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. Before we dismiss, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this focus group discussion.