

Annex D: Factsheet on KidSTART

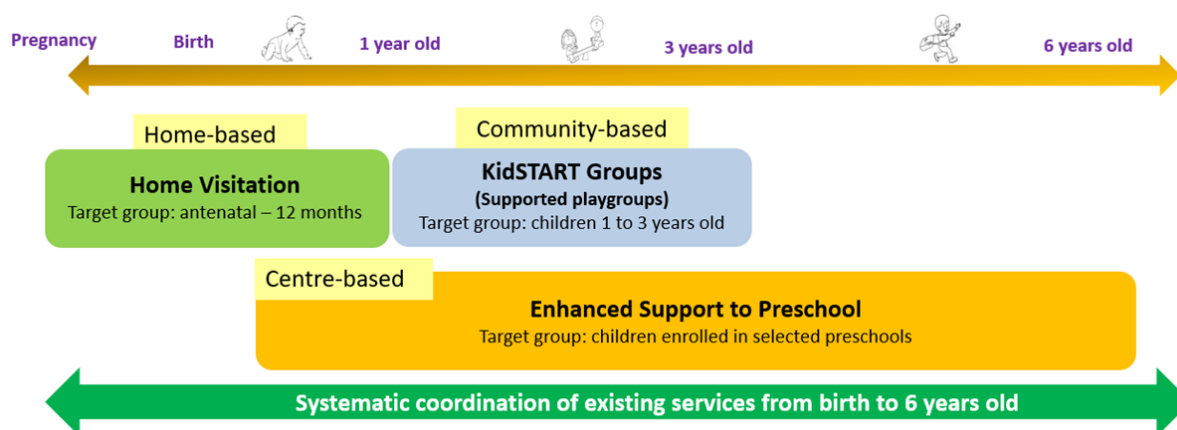
1 To provide children from low-income families with greater support so that they can have a good start in life, KidSTART was introduced as a pilot from July 2016 to support families with child development, coordinate holistic services for families where needed, and monitor the developmental progress of children from birth onwards.

2 Currently, KidSTART is in the pilot regions of Kreta Ayer/Bukit Merah, Taman Jurong/Boon Lay and Geylang Serai, and has benefitted about 1,000 children from low-income families so far. ECDA works with key partners such as the hospitals, Social Service Offices, Family Service Centres and other agencies to identify and reach out to families with infants and young children who can benefit from KidSTART.

The KidSTART Approach

3 The child is the focus of KidSTART interventions. Our multi-disciplinary approach integrates efforts across the key domains of health, learning and development to support the child's holistic development in the early years. Engaging parents is an important aspect of our programme given their crucial role in the child's development.

4 KidSTART is made up of three key programme components that are set in a child's familiar setting and designed to cater to the different stages of development.



a. KidSTART Home Visitation Programme (HVP)

What is it? This consists of regular home visits to parents (or main caregivers) and their infants, from antenatal stage until the child is three years old. Parents receive support in skills and practical knowledge across areas of child growth, development, health and nutrition. Regular screening of the child's development and maternal well-being across the antenatal and postnatal stages over a period of 3 years are also conducted to identify and treat issues early. In addition, group-based activities called 'Group Connect' are organised for parents to provide peer support and reinforce learning from home visits. When appropriate, the children are also enrolled into preschool.

ECDA has partnered KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) to jointly deliver the HVP. This leverages the mutual strengths across the health and early childhood domains for a multi-disciplinary approach to KidSTART.

Who conducts these visits? Depending on the point of intake, these visits are undertaken either by home visitors from KKH or ECDA. Home visitors are professionals with qualifications and/or relevant experience in sectors such as health, early childhood or social services. They are supported by other multi-disciplinary professionals, such as pediatricians and nurses, to ensure that the home visitors are able to address the needs of parents and children.

b. KidSTART Groups (Supported Playgroups)

What is it? These are weekly community-based sessions for parents or main caregivers and their toddlers, aged 1 to 3 years old at the point of entry into KidSTART Groups. These sessions are based on the Supported Playgroups concept¹, and help parents and caregivers to build up skills in child development and parent-child bonding through an evidence-based curricula of structured and purposeful play.

Parents are provided with educational resources to reinforce their learning at home. KidSTART Group facilitators conduct home visits for families who need additional support. Children requiring pre-school placement are supported to find an appropriate pre-school programme.

Who conducts these sessions? The curriculum is delivered by ECDA-trained facilitators who have past experience working with young children and families.

c. KidSTART Enhanced Support to Preschools

What is it? This is a model of support piloted in selected Anchor Operator preschools operated by PAP Community Foundation and NTUC First Campus. Selected preschools are provided with additional resources to improve engagement with and support for parents, and to improve the child's school readiness. This may include addressing barriers related to poor preschool attendance and referrals to other support programmes to ensure their children's developmental needs are addressed. Eligible children who are currently enrolled in these preschools receive KidSTART support.

Who delivers the support? Child Enabling Executives are deployed to the selected preschools to work closely with the teachers, parents, and local community partners to build a strong network of support for KidSTART children.

5 KidSTART recognises the importance of collaborating with community partners and agencies that impact the child's well-being. For example, KidSTART officers work closely with Family Service Centres and Social Service Offices to engage the parents

¹ Unlike community playgroups, supported playgroups are playgroups supported by facilitators who are trained in early childhood development and equipped with the skills to engage and support families/ parents. The facilitators help parents learn about child development and reduce social isolation.

and integrate support. KidSTART focuses on enhancing child development and parent-child interactions, and complements the support provided by these partners for these families. KidSTART also taps on the unique strengths and resources in pilot areas to co-create models and encourage community participation, such as in the area of outreach and running of local programmes.

Updates from the Pilot

6 In the pilot, it has been found that KidSTART parents generally appreciate the value of early childhood development and share the desire for their young children to have a good start in life. However, many are not sure how to nurture their children. KidSTART staff have been working with these parents with practical guidance and support.

7 Feedback from families have been positive and encouraging. Parents say that they feel better supported and more confident in their parenting skills. Parents also shared that they were better able to engage their child and their children are also more expressive and interacting better.

8 In addition, community partners have also been strongly supportive of KidSTART. This is an important success factor and we look forward to collaborating with more partners to provide support to KidSTART families.