



Evidence and
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Summit 2023
9-11 October

Melbourne, Australia & Online



Behavioural and Implementation
Science Interventions
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#115 - Evaluation of the Kids First Early Years Education Program - Kindergarten Model: supporting real-world implementation.

Presenting Author(s)*

1. Ms Claire Jennings¹
2. Ms Eliza Stockdale¹
3. Ms Joanne O'Connell²

Affiliation

1. Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia
2. Kids First Australia

Country of residence

Australia

Objectives/aims

In 2021, the Centre for Community Child Health commenced evaluation of Kids First Australia's *Early Years Education Program – Kindergarten Model (EYEP-KM)*. EYEP-KM is an enhanced early learning model that provides a trauma-informed relational pedagogy approach, coupled with the provision of support and capacity-building activities for families.

The evaluation objectives are to:

1. understand how the EYEP-KM is being implemented;
2. describe and specify the EYEP-KM in a refined program logic;
3. develop recommendations to iteratively improve the design and delivery of the EYEP-KM; and
4. summarise the impact of the EYEP-KM.

Methods

The evaluation adopts a utilisation-focused evaluation approach (Patton, 2013), meaning that the evaluation has been designed and facilitated with a strong focus on optimising its eventual use. This evaluation also builds the capacity of Kids First to monitor, evaluate and learn about EYEP-KM beyond the evaluation period. While



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Kids First are keen to understand the impact of EYEP-KM, implementation is also a key component of the evaluation. The focus on implementation has been informed by Hateley-Browne et al., (2019) and Proctor et al. (2011).

- Clarificative evaluation (workshops, literature scan, document review)
- Formative evaluation (six cycles of action learning data collection and workshops, inclusive of capacity building for EYEP-KM Working Group and Lead Teachers)
 - The action learning workshops provide opportunities for sharing findings with staff. An inclusive approach to data interpretation and identification of areas for improvement is embedded. The evaluation team undertake capacity building sessions with Kids First representatives, to support staff with improvement work.
- Summative evaluation (quasi-experimental 'before and after' study design; CLASS observations, staff feedback)

Main findings

This abstract relates to subtheme 3: *What works and how to do it: Evaluating implementation and impact*. Please note that the evaluation is in progress, and this abstract includes selected findings to date.

Findings (implementation outcomes):

- Implementation fidelity
 - Improved implementation of EYEP-KM enablers and pedagogical principles
 - Review of data for new and existing staff suggests that longer term staff are tracking better with implementation of the model, though there remains room for improvement
- Reach
 - Average child attendance at Kids First kindergartens is above 80 per cent
- Acceptability
 - Evidence of staff and family acceptability of EYEP-KM
- Feasibility
 - Training, resources and a supportive team and organisational culture increase implementation feasibility. Staff report that increased planning time allocation would improve their ability to implement EYEP-KM.

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Data has also been collected in relation to barriers and enablers for implementation, as well as the impact of the model on classroom quality and staff outcomes. Scalability and sustainability of EYEP-KM will be explored in Year 3. Ideas to address identified barriers to implementation are trialled within each service, and the EYEP-KM Working Group takes responsibility for improvement work at the organisational level.

The proposed presentation will focus on sharing lessons from the improvement work and capacity building approach undertaken at service and organisational level, both of which are intended to lead to stronger implementation of EYEP-KM in kindergartens. Trends in implementation data collected over four cycles will be provided, and future opportunities for supporting the implementation of EYEP-KM will be discussed.