



integrated health & mental health consultation

Fidelity to *Kid Connects* Model Elements

Any group or organization desiring to implement a Kid Connects early childhood mental health consultation program will need to determine whether they can implement such a program with fidelity to the tested Kid Connects approach. Such fidelity requires adherence to all of the Kid Connects Model Elements. The Kid Connects Model Elements are supported by evidence of effectiveness based on research, expert opinion, lessons from the field, and theoretical rationales. A program is implemented in accordance with these Model Elements, implementing agencies can have a reasonably high level of confidence that results will be comparable to those found in the original Kid Connects program.

Clients

Element 1. *Kid Connects* serves multiple clients-- including young children, infants through 5 years old, their families, their early care and education providers, and the early care and education setting as a whole.

Element 2. *Kid Connects* clients are in settings with demonstrated need, including high percentages of low-income children, typically not already well-resourced with supplemental services.

Element 3. *Kid Connects* carefully selects early care and education partners who are ready to partner effectively for early childhood mental health consultation services, as identified through use of the *Kid Connects* Early Care Site Readiness Assessment Tool.

Kid Connects Staff

Element 4. *Kid Connects* Consultants and Supervisors are highly skilled mental health professionals (master's prepared) with specialized experience with young children's development and mental health.

Element 5. *Kid Connects* Consultants demonstrate high levels of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant Core Knowledge and Competencies, as measured by use of the *Kid Connects* Self-Evaluation Checklist and are knowledgeable about:

- typical and atypical child development
- best practices in early childhood (EC) settings which support optimal development
- clinical assessments and strategies best suited to EC intervention
- early care and education settings, industry, regulations
- community resources and effective case management strategies

Element 6. *Kid Connects* Consultants are skilled in providing flexible, individualized consultation services in community-based settings—including program consultation, child-specific consultation, and clinical intervention.

Element 7. *Kid Connects* Supervisors provide *Kid Connects* Consultants reflective clinical supervision, demonstrate integration of the theories, and facilitate professional development essential to the Consultant role through specific supervisory activities including 1:1 clinical supervision, case conferences, team meetings and field supervision.

Intervention Context and Application

Element 8. *Kid Connects* integrated health and mental health consultation is much more intensive and comprehensive than the typical as-needed, per-child, consultation often provided to young children. *Kid Connects* services aim to change the culture of entire programs and leave parents and early care and education staff better able to understand and guide their child's development with particular attention to social and emotional development.

Element 9. *Kid Connects* Consultants spend a substantial amount of time in each early care center or home. A full time *Kid Connects* Consultant would typically work with 2 large centers and one home provider, covering about 150 kids per consultant, with 10 – 15% receiving intervention level services.

Element 10. *Kid Connects* Consultants utilize a variety of methods to identify program and individual child needs, including standardized assessment tools (i.e. ASQ, DECA, DECA-C, CCAR), interviews, and observation.

Element 11. *Kid Connects* provides a variety of intensive early childhood mental health consultation services, flexible and individualized to meet the varying needs of different children, families, classrooms.

- a. All children in *Kid Connects* centers and homes receive health screenings & follow up and universal services (e.g. children within a classroom that receives classroom consultation).
- b. Some children – typically about 30% of the children in *Kid Connects* sites-- receive somewhat more services--“prevention plus”— at least 3 individualized service hours per year, not including group work.
- c. A small percentage of children identified with higher needs—typically about 10% of children in *Kid Connects* sites -- receive full clinical intervention level services.

Element 12. *Kid Connects* programs attend to expulsion practices in early care settings by reviewing policies, querying on a regular basis about the at-risk status of children, and by providing child specific services to those children at risk for expulsion with the intent of maintaining children in their care setting or planning for transition.

Element 13. *Kid Connects* services are provided in young children's natural settings, primarily the early care and education setting.

Element 14. A key element of the *Kid Connects* consultation work is providing training and support to early care and education providers.

Element 15. *Kid Connects* is a relationship-based program and *Kid Connects* Consultants develop trusting and effective relationships within early care and education centers and with families, based on the principles of Humility, Honoring, and Generosity, Flexibility in Responding, and Focusing on Possibilities.

Element 16. *Kid Connects* services are provided within a context of community support for early childhood but mental health consultation, and partnerships are established with the local early childhood council, mental health, and health providers.

Element 17. When specific needs are identified for specific children, *Kid Connects* Consultants make professional recommendations to address these needs and, as necessary, work to link children and families with the appropriate community resources.

Program Monitoring/ Program Evaluation and Use of Data

Element 18. *Kid Connects* programs utilize a variety of data gathering methods and use information gathered to describe service recipients and program process, to evaluate program outcomes, to guide program planning, and to demonstrate accountability to funders and other key stakeholders.

Element 19. *Kid Connects* programs utilize evaluation tools designed to identify outcomes for children, parents, early care and education staff, and early care and education programs.

Element 20. *Kid Connects* programs assure that their program goals and program evaluation align with the desired outcomes of their key stakeholders, including parents, early care and education staff, funders, and *Kid Connects* staff. *Kid Connects* evaluation results are shared with key stakeholders periodically and feedback is obtained for continuous quality improvement of program evaluation.

Element 21. Whenever possible, *Kid Connects* programs utilize evaluation tools that are efficient to use and proven valid and reliable. All *Kid Connects* programs utilize the same set of core evaluation measures, to facilitate data sharing and comparison.

Kid Connects Agency

Element 22. A *Kid Connects* Implementing Agency is located in and operated by an organization with interest and capacity to provide ECMH consultation.

Element 23. A *Kid Connects* Implementing Agency is located in and operated by an organization with longevity, known in the community for being a successful provider of prevention and intervention services to low-income families.

Element 24. A *Kid Connects* Implementing Agency is located in and operated by an organization with successful partnerships with providers of mental health services, physical health services, special needs referral agencies, and early care and education. Successful partnerships will be characterized by: regular meetings between systems related to early childhood; cross-training related to early childhood between systems; and a strong sense between key partners that they are all serving one community and are committed to working through issues to develop one coherent program together.

Element 25. Adequate support and structure shall be in place to support *Kid Connects* Consultants and Supervisors to implement the program and to assure that data is maintained and managed in a protected manner with attention to accuracy and usability.