



### **The KidSTART Program**

- Serves young children with complex developmental, mental health, medical, and family needs
- Utilizes a trans-disciplinary approach to assessment and treatment
- Provides developmental and social-emotional/mental health Screenings to identify potential concerns, Triage to determine level and complexity of need, Assessment by a trans-disciplinary team, and Referral & Treatment to ensure that children and caregivers receive the services they need
- Uses blended funding including First 5 San Diego grant funds, EPSDT, Medi-Cal and other health plans

### **Why a specialized approach is needed for children with complex needs**

- Between 10-14% of young children in the general population, and up to 61% of young children in foster care, show signs of developmental delay.<sup>i</sup>
- Between 3-6% of young children in the general population, and 25% - 40% of young children in foster care, show signs of social-emotional concerns.<sup>ii</sup>
- Early intervention services can have a significant positive impact on child outcomes. Unfortunately, various studies have shown that the rates of service use for young children are as low as 3-40% (various studies).
- Intensive care coordination is integral to KidSTART success. Service navigation is particularly challenging for children who have complex needs in multiple areas, which requires multiple services that are not typically integrated. Recent policy recommendations address this challenge by calling for, “a range of comprehensive physical, mental, emotional, developmental, and family assessments, reassessments, and services that address the needs of families with infants and toddlers.”<sup>iii</sup>

### **KidSTART’s Program Components**

- **Screening:** The Developmental Screening & Enhancement Program, First 5 Healthy Development Services, and other partner agencies throughout the community use standardized screening tools to identify potential developmental and social-emotional/behavioral needs for children under age six.
- **Triage:** During this process to determine eligibility, a licensed psychologist completes a comprehensive global developmental evaluation, and when indicated the psychologist collaborates with a pediatrician to review all available information about a child’s history and needs, including a review of existing reports and contacting other service providers who have worked with the child. This information is used to determine whether the child is eligible for further KidSTART services based on their degree of complexity. Children who are not eligible for further KidSTART services are referred to other community providers for less intensive services.

- **Assessment:** For children who are eligible to continue with the program, a trans-disciplinary team of medical, developmental, and mental health clinicians assesses the child then collaborates to determine diagnoses, needs, and appropriate intervention services. This includes a home-based assessment completed by a Care Coordinator, who uses standardized measures and a social work approach to determine strengths and needs of the child and family. The team of providers, known as the Integrated Clinical Team (ICT), partners with the family through a structured Family ICT Meeting to develop the child’s Care Plan.
- **Referral:** A KidSTART Care Coordinator partners with each family to make referrals and ensure that recommended services are received by helping to overcome barriers to service. This may include attending appointments with family, providing weekly phone calls or home visits to encourage engagement, or facilitating the exchange of information between providers. For families needing extra support to overcome practical barriers to service, such as transportation or housing needs, KidSTART can assign a Family Partner to work with the caregivers on these basic needs.
- **Treatment:** The KidSTART program offers an array of evidence-based developmental and mental health treatment. Interventions include:
  - individual speech, behavioral, occupational, and physical therapy
  - classes such as Hanen’s “It Takes Two to Talk,” “Zones” (sensory regulation class adapted for preschool aged children), and “Function Junction” (building executive functioning skills)
  - trauma-informed mental health treatment that is driven by the unique client picture, is culturally/linguistically competent, and utilizes evidence-informed mental health interventions
  - psychiatric evaluations and medication management when needed
  - caregiver support services, including support groups, educational resources, and assistance in accessing services to address their own wellness and mental health needs

*All the therapists and doctors that worked with us were excellent. [KidSTART] was one of the best programs we have ever been apart of. Not only did all the therapists care for my son, but they also care about our needs as parents/caregivers. We feel very blessed and thankful for this year that we have spent with all the staff at [KidSTART]. We are forever grateful!!*

**KidSTART Contact Information**

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<sup>i</sup> First & Palfrey, 1994  
<sup>ii</sup> Stahmer et al., 2005  
<sup>iii</sup> Zero to Three et al., 2011