Not surprising: successful implementation equals successful outcomes.

Implementation science studies the process of implementing evidence-based programs and practices. Current research from ‘the science’ offers ideas that enhance outcomes when implementing new initiatives. Using them to support your KidsMatter implementation could leave you feeling well equipped to promote mental health and wellbeing in your ECEC service.

What does the science say?

The move from idea to action is not an easy one. Organisations who have travelled this road have offered ideas about what works and what doesn’t when implementing changes.

The research shows there are four things to consider for successful implementation: implementation stages, implementation drivers, connecting policy and practice and expert implementation support.

Implementation stages

Breaking down implementation into smaller parts makes it easier to manage and supports effective implementation by ensuring we are well informed, prepared and organized.

1. Exploration

Find out the needs of your ECEC service community; the children, families and educators. Collect ideas and think about how you might put these ideas into practice. Take the opportunity to assess if an action will lead to the outcomes you are hoping for too.

2. Installation

It’s time for preparation and planning. Getting the resources you need and pulling together a plan will make implementing your ideas a lot easier. Communicate your plans with educators and families and get their input too. This ensures everyone feels included and can motivate them to be involved.

3. Initial implementation

Your Leadership Team starts to show their excitement about KidsMatter! They can communicate with your community about the changes and keeping everyone informed. People might have different reactions to the changes. Having strategies to manage responses to change can make for a smoother ride. Keeping a record of how things are going will help future decision-making.

4. Full implementation

It’s time to celebrate! You can see the benefits of trying new things, your ideas have become standard practice and you can see positive outcomes in children’s mental health. Your ECEC service now has the capacity to drive the initiative and keep moving forward.
Implementation Drivers; keep things moving and interesting

Implementation drivers build the foundation for effective implementation and make it successful, possible and sustainable. They are features like:

- Supporting educators to gain knowledge and skills while they implement changes
- Adapting plans to meet the needs of the community through knowing the broad views of your Leadership Team
- People communicating and demonstrating their motivation and commitment
- Having necessary resources available (especially time and people).

Connecting policy and practice

Your service can show a united vision for implementing KidsMatter in everything you do. Embed your goals to promote children's mental health at every level of your ECEC service; your practices reflect your policies and vice versa.

Expert implementation support

Going it alone is not easy. Support from your Facilitator, Educational Leader, and local community organisations or educators from other ECEC services can provide benefits such as:

- Educating and stimulating interest
- Providing links and partnerships with community agencies and other services implementing KidsMatter
- Building capacity and developing new ideas and strategies
- Offering an objective view
- Assessing where you are at and where you want to go

What supports implementation in KidsMatter services?

The KidsMatter Early Childhood evaluation also reflects the science. It shows that services who achieved the strongest outcomes for children's mental health and wellbeing:

- became informed about the KidsMatter Components
- followed 'Plan Do Review'
- had a strong Leadership Team
- embedded KidsMatter in their curriculum
- had an ongoing commitment to implementing KidsMatter

Reflective Questions

- How are you going with your current implementation stage? Would you do anything differently?
- What are implementation drivers at your service? How might you build on these?
- How do your practices reflected in your policies and vice versa?
- How can you see KidsMatter embedded in your ECEC service curriculum?
Is there anything you need from your Facilitator?

To reach your Facilitator, call, email, arrange a video conference, or get in touch on our Facebook page.

Key References
