Implementing KidsMatter involves continual cycles of planning, implementation and monitoring; celebrating and sharing achievements, relationship-building and professional learning. The 'Plan–Do–Review' process that underpins KidsMatter can guide you through this.

In some ways, the ‘Plan’ phase is the most important in the 'Plan–Do–Review' process. This is because it is more likely that KidsMatter will be successful if its implementation is carefully planned out beforehand.

One way that many organisations approach planning for change is to develop an action plan. That's what the 'Plan' phase of the 'Plan–Do–Review' process is all about.

An Action Plan helps organisations focus their ideas, develop goals and identify the steps they need to take to achieve those goals. Developing an Action Plan to help your service implement KidsMatter involves several key steps:

- identifying strengths
- setting Component goals
- brainstorming strategies
- identifying concerns.

You might already be doing something similar with your Quality Improvement Plan as part of the National Quality Standard.

**Identifying strengths**

Look at what is already being done to support the mental health and wellbeing of the children at your ECEC service. Celebrate those things!

As a team, you could brainstorm what you're already doing under each of the Target Areas of each Component. Your community surveys will also provide you with some ideas about this (more information can be found in **Collating survey results**).

**Setting Component goals**

This involves working with staff to identify what more you can do to address the Target Areas in each KidsMatter Component. Again, your community surveys and your strengths can help when you're discussing and setting goals for each Component.

When you know the areas you want to develop, you can work on turning them into clear goals for action.

Try to create goals that are SMART:

- **Specific**—Goals are well defined and clear.
- **Measurable**—How will you know when each goal is achieved?
- **Achievable**—Goals are realistic and take the current situation at your ECEC service into account.
Brainstorming strategies

Have a think about the many possibilities that will help your ECEC service achieve your goals within each Component of KidsMatter. Remember, the more strategies you brainstorm the better! This will help you to consider all of the options at your disposal.

Identifying concerns

This involves thinking about any potential issues that might influence your progress. If possible, you might identify potential solutions to these obstacles, bearing in mind your team's strengths and resources (e.g., skills, people, knowledge etc.).

Once you've gathered this information and developed the strategies you need, you can put it all together into an Action Plan for KidsMatter.

Creating an Action Plan

Your Action Plan should focus on:

- how strategies will be implemented
- what resources are needed
- where implementation will take place
- who will be involved
- who will be responsible
- when implementation will start, and
- when goals and strategies will be reviewed.

To do this, you can use the KidsMatter Action Plan, the NQS Quality Improvement Plan or create your own version to document exactly what is going to happen. You can do this any way you like—as long as it's documented.

We've said it before, but this is important: don't worry if your Leadership Team identifies more than one area where further development could be useful! This is especially common when services first start KidsMatter and it's actually a positive part of the process.

You don't need to address everything in your first Action Plan; as KidsMatter is a continual cycle of development, it is fine to prioritise one or two things and work on others later. Also, a lot of the Target Areas in the Components of KidsMatter are related, so when you develop one area, you might see changes happening in another area.
Having trouble getting started?

If your Leadership Team is having difficulty identifying where to start, you could:

- contact your Facilitator
- present the options to your broader ECEC team, or
- present the options to another person who is familiar with the ECEC service but not directly involved with the Leadership Team.

Once your Action Plan is developed, the next step is to implement it (the ‘Do’ phase) and then look back at how it went (the ‘Review’ phase). We’ll be talking more about these parts of the process in our next post, ‘Unpacking the ‘Plan–Do–Review’ process Part II: ‘Do’ and ‘Review’.

Reflective Questions

- What does your ECEC service need to do in order to progress the ‘Plan’ process?
- What might help you decide which areas to start working on in KidsMatter?
- What strengths does your ECEC community have that you can utilise in this planning?
- How can you ensure your ECEC community is engaged in your planning process? What communication processes can you put in place to support this happening?

Is there anything you need from your Facilitator?

You can call, email or arrange a video conference with your Facilitator, or get in touch on our Facebook page.

More Information

How Does KidsMatter work?


How is KidsMatter Early Childhood implemented?