Idea 5
INTEGRATED EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Integration and shared back offices provide several advantages for early childhood services.

Due to the comprehensive nature of early childhood development and the necessity for cooperation between city departments such as Social Services, Health and Education, merging the back office when it comes to tracking and monitoring the child’s development increases efficiency.

It also influences caregiver well-being by providing a better diagnosis of their situation, and can be based close to the target population, for example in a community centre.

At a glance...

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<th>COST</th>
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GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT
- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE
City

EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL
In experimentation

Photo: Jon Spaull/Bernard van Leer Foundation
OUTCOME AREAS

- Attendance to at least four pre-natal visits
- Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months
- Healthy food preparation in infancy
- Increased frequency of storytelling, singing and reading
- Increased frequency of caregiver–infant play
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased caregiver-reported sense of self-efficacy
- Use of non-violent approaches to discipline
- Improved referrals across early childhood services
- Improved access to early childhood services

REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- Across the Netherlands, several cities have been experimenting with the concept of neighbourhood concierges, based in community centres. Each centre is composed of an interdisciplinary team, including health, psychology, and social support specialists. The team coordinator is the point of contact for families with young children. The team assesses the needs of the families in a holistic way, and provides care or refers the family to other services. This system relies on good data-sharing systems and training for the frontline workers.

- In Brazil, Criança Feliz programme sends trained social workers to the poorest households to teach parents how to stimulate the development of their children under 3. The programme targets families who receive welfare, connecting them to an integrated network of public servants and providing referrals for children who need extra assistance. In its first year, social workers visited more than 78,000 children and pregnant women in 25 states.

- In London, UK, data are being shared across local departments to increase efficiency in preventing child abuse and neglect. The model analyses various data sources, including school and health records, to judge families’ risk scores. Around 80% accurate, it identifies and alerts social workers to those who need extra support.

- In the Netherlands, since 2014 the Mothers of Rotterdam programme has been identifying the most vulnerable pregnant women and providing them with targeted and holistic social and medical care through a personal coach. With regular visits up to their children’s second birthday, the mothers are offered personalised support integrating the city’s different services with the aim of taking control of their own situation.

RELATED IDEAS

1. Priority access to services for young families
2. ICT-enabled coaching
3. Parent coaching bundled with health services

LEARN MORE

- Parents+ Starter Kit