

# KidSTART

(Revised 04/24/20)

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## Policy

To access KidSTART services, SWs can call 858-966-5990 to discuss the potential referral and obtain a copy of the referral form, fill out all pages of the referral form and fax to 858-966-7508.

The SW must ensure that KidSTART has the 04-29/04-29sp and 04-24A-P/04-24A-Psp forms for each child (consent to treat and authorization to share information).

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## Background

The purpose of the KidSTART Program is to provide comprehensive triage, assessments, referral, and treatment for children with complex developmental problems, ages birth through five years (0-5). Infants, toddlers and preschoolers experiencing atypical development and behavior, along with their families and caregivers, will be provided with ready access to treatment at the appropriate level of intensity.

The KidSTART Program provides a centralized program where young children with the most serious and complex problems can receive the timely intervention, treatment, and support they need to reach their highest potential, live safely, and access support services. KidSTART is a collaborative program between Rady Children's Hospital, the First 5 Commission, CWS and Behavioral Health Services.

Summary of KidSTART services:

- **S** Screening; developmental, socio-emotional and behavioral health screenings
- **T** Triage; evaluations by a clinical psychologist and a care coordinator
- **A** Assessment; family centered trans-disciplinary assessments and treatment plan development
- **R** Referral; linkages to additional diagnostic, therapeutic and community resources
- **T** Treatment; integrated developmental and mental health services and ongoing care coordination.

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## Program Description

KidSTART is a program for children under 6 years old with complex needs in multiple areas of daily life. After an evaluation, each child and family referred to KidSTART will be recommended for services that fit their unique needs. The recommended services can be provided by KidSTART or another program in the community. These services may be delivered in individual, family, or group settings.

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**Program Description  
(cont.)**

The two components of the program, KidSTART Mental Health Clinic (operated by [Rady Children's Chadwick Center for Children & Families](#)) and KidSTART Center (operated by [Rady Children's Developmental Services](#)), are integrated to allow both mental health specialists and developmental specialists to assess needs, develop collaborative treatment plans, provide unique interventions, and facilitate long-term care coordination for the family.

**Who provides KidSTART services?**

A specialized team of professionals come together based on the unique needs of the child and family. Members of the team can include:

- Behavior Specialist
- Care Coordinator (Masters level)
- Child Psychiatrist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Family Partner
- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Pediatrician
- Physical Therapist
- Speech-Language Pathologist

**What Risk Factors Make an Appropriate Referral to KidSTART?**

Children are typically referred to KidSTART when they have developmental and mental health concerns, PLUS other risk factors including, but not limited to:

- Poor response to intervention
- Conflicting or uncertain diagnoses
- Medical factors that contribute to developmental or social-emotional concerns
- Risk factors such as prenatal alcohol/ substance exposure
- Complex family history
- Placement instability (home, school, daycare)
- Trauma exposure

**KidSTART Eligibility Requirements:**

- San Diego County resident
- Under 6 years of age
- Not currently enrolled in or starting kindergarten in the next six months
- Developmental *and* mental health needs, plus medical or family needs

**How is KidSTART Unique?**

KidSTART is funded by First 5 San Diego and County of San Diego – Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health Services; the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program; and the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

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**Program Description  
(cont.)**

KidSTART’s team approach to services and transdisciplinary programming enables the team to create a custom treatment plan for children with multiple needs. Intensive family support services are also provided to help families understand the unique needs of each child, access services that are needed immediately, and plan for future services that may be needed as the child grows older.

Given the complexity of children’s needs, services at KidSTART can be provided for six to 18 months.

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**Alignment with SET**

- SET [Value 1](#) by building shared understanding and agreement through family engagement, collaborating with the whole family to create well-being, and honoring and incorporating the voices of children and youth.
  - SET [Value 2](#) by providing opportunities for biological, kinship, and resource families to communicate and work together for the youth’s best interests and utilizing shared decision making with the child/youth voice and well-being at the forefront.
  - SET [Value 3](#) by having a continual focus on children’s well-being while they are in the care of CWS.
  - SET [Value 4](#) by maintaining open communication and transparency with families and community partners as well as ensuring that staff and community partners have a shared vision for safety, permanency, and well-being.
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