



# EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

## WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO IMPROVE CHILD-CAREGIVER INTERACTIONS AND CAREGIVER WELL-BEING?

*Ideas...*

1 Priority access to services for young families	2 Neighbourhood directories for early childhood services	3 ICT-enabled coaching	4 Parent coaching bundled with health services	5 Integrated early childhood services
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This category focuses on what a city's Social Services, along with Education and Health services, can provide to support the maximisation of positive child–caregiver interactions. It looks at these interactions from the perspective of the individual. It has a strong focus on caregiver behaviours but also on their well-being, and how they connect with and strengthen their local social networks as parents. It also looks at how accessible early childhood services are to caregivers.

At this level, impact can be measured through indicators focusing on caregiving behaviours, caregiver well-being, and service efficiency.

*Sample outcome areas...*

- Attendance to at least four prenatal 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

Idea 1

# PRIORITY ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Giving families with young children preferential access to local services, such as not having to wait at the town hall for administrative tasks, improves their well-being.

It also sends a political message of commitment from the local authorities. It requires data collection on the administrative situation of families with young children, and a capacity to share the data across city departments.

At a glance...

**COST**

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

**MAINTENANCE**

● ○ ○

**GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT**

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

**MINIMUM SCALE**

City



**EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL**

In experimentation

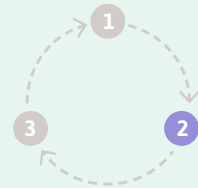


Photo: Vanessa Touzard/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



## OUTCOME AREAS

- Attendance to at least four prenatal visits
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased caregiver-reported sense of self-efficacy
- Improved referrals across early childhood services
- Improved access to early childhood services



## REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- **Boa Vista, in the northern Brazilian state of Roraima**, provides preferential administrative access to families with young children for their land tenure formalisation programme. This prioritises improving the housing situation of families with young children, who need to establish a stable living environment for the healthy development of their children.



## RELATED IDEAS

- 6 Opening public facilities out of hours
- 2 Subsidised public transport
- 8 Everything nearby
- 5 Integrated early childhood services

## Idea 2

# NEIGHBOURHOOD DIRECTORIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Cities and even communities themselves may not be aware of all the informal and private resources available to support child development.

Applying community solidarity – or the principles of the sharing economy – can be done through the creation of neighbourhood directories. These directories can record residents' skills and experience in areas such as child health, nutrition, childcare, and early learning parenting and topics. This allows caregivers in need of counsel to reach out to someone nearby. It also fosters local community cohesion.

## At a glance...

### COST

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

### MAINTENANCE

● ● ○

### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

### MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



### EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Conceptual

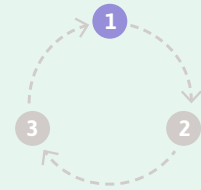


Photo: Courtesy of Che Aria Respiro



## More info...



### OUTCOME AREAS

- Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months
- Healthy food preparation in infancy
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- Increased caregiver-reported sense of self-efficacy
- Improved access to early childhood services



### REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Chicago, USA**, the Neighborhood Parents Network connects parents across the city to enable sharing of resources, tips, skills and events and ease the experience of being a parent in the city.
- In **Tel Aviv, Israel**, the city's digital platform for parents of young children, Digitaf, provides support and parenting tips, but also informs caregivers of programming suitable for young children, opportunities and child services across the city.



### RELATED IDEAS

- 8 Everything nearby
- 3 ICT-enabled coaching
- 5 Integrated early childhood services

## Idea 3

# ICT-ENABLED COACHING

While still relatively untested relative to person-to-person-based approaches, the use of mobile phones and other technologies, as well as the application of artificial intelligence to augment parent coaching, is a promising area for exploration.

These approaches allow for large-scale reach at relatively low cost and allow caregivers more anonymity to address some sensitive topics.

## At a glance...

### COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

### MAINTENANCE

● ● ○

### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

### MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



### EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

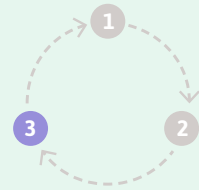


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## More info...



### OUTCOME AREAS

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### REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- **Tel Aviv, Israel**, is using its digital platform to deliver customised content to parents with babies and toddlers. This includes connecting new parents to services and activities near their homes and sharing practical child development tips that caregivers can use in their daily routines.
- In **Jordan**, the International Rescue Committee and the Behavioural Insights Team tested different child development messages delivered to refugee parents via mobile phone. In a randomised controlled trial, they found that by using a science-based subject line, they could increase click-throughs to YouTube videos on parenting by 25%.
- In the **USA**, Vroom identifies potential intentional ‘brain building moments’ in the routines of parents and developed more than 900 tips for activities that don’t require much additional time. For example, stacking and counting pieces of fruit when eating or telling a story during a diaper change.
- In **South Africa**, ChildConnect uses SMS messaging programmes focusing on early language development. It sends three SMS messages a week to participating mothers, with tips on activities to develop early language. It spans five provinces, about 1000 mothers, and is available in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans.
- *Suaahara*, a maternal child health and nutrition initiative in **Nepal**, holds a weekly radio drama series called *Banchan Amma* which broadcasts messages on nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, and health care, with the aim of changing behaviours.



### RELATED IDEAS

- 4 Behavioural prompts
- 4 Parent coaching bundled with health services
- 5 Integrated early childhood services

## Idea 4

# PARENT COACHING BUNDLED WITH HEALTH SERVICES

Health services are a natural touch point for working with parents, since they reach the family during pregnancy and have regular contact during a child's early years.

Healthcare workers are also typically trusted figures in the community and people from whom caregivers would find advice credible. Training healthcare workers to deliver new messages and use more effective coaching techniques can be a very cost-effective way to make a difference in children's development and parental well-being.

## At a glance...

### COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

### MAINTENANCE



### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

### MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



### EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

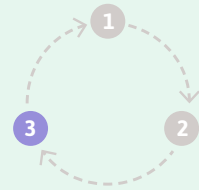


Photo: Vanessa Touzard/Bernard van Leer Foundation





## More info...



### OUTCOME AREAS

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### REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- The Reach Out and Read programme promotes reading to children through healthcare workers. Health workers provide books and encourage reading to children during child visits before school age. Doctors even ‘prescribe’ reading. The programme services 4.7 million children in the **USA**. Evaluations have found that parents are 2.5 times more likely to read to children, and report improvements in the language development of 3–6 month olds.
- In **Kenya** and **Mozambique**, PATH trains community health workers to deliver the Care for Child Development package designed by the WHO and Unicef. It combines basic health messages with child development topics such as the importance of play. As a result, PATH has seen women come to clinics earlier in their pregnancy, higher rates of exclusive breastfeeding, and more caregiver–infant interaction.
- In **Harare, Zimbabwe**, lay health workers (employed by the city) are trained in problem-solving talk therapy. Clinics refer caregivers showing symptoms of depression to the ‘friendship bench’ – a bench where lay health workers (often grandmothers) are seated – to receive counselling. A randomised controlled trial found significant impacts on levels of maternal depression, which is closely linked to child health and nutrition.
- In **Peru** and **Brazil**, the government employed home visitors originally hired to address basic issues of health and hygiene, and trained them to incorporate topics such as nutrition and early learning. This approach showed positive effects on areas such as levels of anaemia and the frequency of storytelling and playing with infants and toddlers.



### RELATED IDEAS

- 4 Behavioural prompts
- 8 Everything nearby
- 1 Priority access to services for young families
- 3 ICT-enabled coaching
- 5 Integrated early childhood services
- 3 Data dashboards



### LEARN MORE

- Parents+ Starter Kit

## 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...*

### COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

### MAINTENANCE

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### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

### MINIMUM SCALE

City



### EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

In experimentation

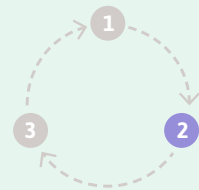


Photo: Jon Spauull/Bernard van Leer Foundation



## More info...



### OUTCOME AREAS

- Attendance to at least four pre-natal visits
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- 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
- 3 ICT-enabled coaching
- 4 Parent coaching bundled with health services



### LEARN MORE

- Parents+ Starter Kit