



Identifying problems at an earlier stage by combining data and knowledge

Parents and children deserve the best chances for a good future. With this in mind, we must invest in the timely identification of risks and the prevention of major problems. After all, we can often see many problems in families coming. We usually wait until problems are very big, only then to deploy help.

With the Smart Start programme we are developing an approach with which we want to help children and families at an earlier stage to prevent problems. How can we do this? With 'design thinking' solutions and by cleverly combining the available data and knowledge.

Why Smart Start?

An unsafe childhood is a major cause of inequality in opportunities for children and families. Violence and neglect affect health, have economic consequences and an increased risk of criminal behavior. And children who grow up with multiple risk factors have a worse prognosis than children who grow up with a single risk factor. We know a great deal about the emergence of complex problems in children and families. Why don't we anticipate this?

Problems in families are not big all at once. Over the years, there have been opportunities that we could have seized. But because preventive action is not taken and care and help are often individually focused, problems are often recognized or acknowledged too late. In addition, integrated working by care and assistance agencies is difficult and there is often a dispersed division of responsibilities. Due to this, no timely action is taken in high-risk situations, with the result that these escalate at some point. This often has an irreversible impact that commonly passes from one generation to the next.

A new vision and approach is needed to improve development opportunities and break through inter-generational problems in children and families.

In addition, the social costs related to the consequences of child abuse are extremely high, healthcare costs continue to rise and there is a scarcity of skilled health-care professionals

With Smart Start we want:

- > to increase development opportunities for children;
- > to prevent further sadness and misery;
- > to break through problems from generation to generation;
- > to tackle rising costs and decreasing budgets and we want to deploy the budgets more effectively;
- > to reduce scarcity of care professionals;
- > to provide more effective care through cooperation in tailor-made teams of experts and through preventive action.

Strategy and approach

The aim of Smart Start is to develop a working method in which data and knowledge are used to identify (risks of) complex problems in children and families at an early stage. By using design thinking we arrive at collective and preventive solutions.

Creating sustainable opportunities for children and families requires a development from 'individual and problem-based' to 'collective and preventive'. Working together is one of the basic principles of Smart Start. It is necessary to develop new thinking and a new design at schools, GPs and in vulnerable neighbourhoods with a common ambition: to offer parents and children the best chances for a good future. For example, we will set up data- and knowledge-based, tailor-made, multidisciplinary teams, close to children and families: compact teams in which the necessary knowledge is available and where integral cooperation takes place.

The core strategy of Smart Start focuses on:

1. Using available data and knowledge
2. A new 'design thinking' design process
3. Long-term (multi-year) effect measurement

Ad. 1 Using what we already know

By gaining insight into available data and using (scientific) knowledge, by combining data and generating new data, we will better be able to identify problems and anticipate them. This knowledge strengthens the basis at schools and in neighbourhoods.

Ad. 2 New design process

With Design Thinking we will gradually design solutions that are not only innovative, but also sustainable and in line with the interests of both the target group and the interests of professionals and other stakeholders. Design Thinking forces us to re-think and use creative working methods, in order to understand the complex issues and the people involved, to the best of our ability.

Ad. 3 Social effects

At Smart Start we opt for multi-year effect measurement in which we (will continue to) measure social effects for children, families and society. Examples include higher CITO scores, fewer early school leavers, fewer child protection measures, less crime and police reports, higher health scores, lower debts and fewer benefits. In short, better opportunities for children to develop themselves.

Let's Start!

Smart Start is a social project that will impact all the parties involved. By acting preventively and collectively on the basis of predictive data and knowledge we can prevent problems at an early stage and offer a better future to many children and families. With a common ambition: a good future for every child.

