

What is KIDS?

The Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS) is a nationally recognized integrated data system for research and evaluation to improve the public health, social, and educational services of children and youth in the City of Philadelphia. Funded through seed grants from the William Penn Foundation KIDS was developed through a collaboration among the City of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania. KIDS was built to create a shared capacity for Philadelphia's civic leaders to produce and use quality information to inform decision making around public policy and practice.

KIDS includes data from children's vital statistics, physical and behavioral health services, homelessness and child welfare services, and public school education. Collected annually the data are available from 1990 to 2008.

Development of KIDS

Penn professors John Fantuzzo from the Graduate School of Education, Dennis Culhane, from the School of Social Policy and Practice, and Trevor Hadley from the School of Medicine co-founded KIDS with leaders in the Philadelphia municipal government and the School

District. They followed a three-phase strategic plan to develop, use, and incorporate KIDS as a core process to foster shared evidence-based decision making.

Phase I of the plan focused on *collaboration*, tackling the legal challenges in state and federal privacy laws governing the use of individual records for research and evaluation purposes. The outcome of this phase was written agreements between KIDS data-providing agencies and Penn to allow Penn as a third party to integrate data to support City and School District research priorities in accord with these laws.

Phase II of the strategic plan centered on the *demonstration* of how KIDS could be used in real time to address high priority research questions. This involved creating the KIDS Policy Group, a governing board of data contributing agencies. This board identified inter-agency priorities for research using integrated data and developed procedures to conduct research and use data according to the best scientific methods and highest ethical standards. This also involved a process for considering finding implications for real time policy and practice. Under the oversight of this KIDS Policy Group a number of important studies were conduct-

ed to examine a diverse set of important issues such as:

- Early childhood education and school readiness
- Early childhood risk for poor school performance
- Coordination of services between child welfare and homeless shelter systems
- Educational well-being of children in foster care
- Characteristics of out-of-school youth and factors for school dropout
- Coordination of services between the public behavioral health system and public school special education programs

These studies generated local and national recognition for KIDS and produced key policy changes in the School District and City public service agencies to enhance child well being.

KIDS as a model for new integrated data systems

Phase III for KIDS is the *incorporation* of the KIDS model by the City and School District's executive leadership into their strategic decision making process. This is currently underway through a development grant from the William Penn Foundation to create a Policy Analysis Center (PAC). The PAC will be

run by the City in close collaboration with the School District and other public institutions that provide services to Philadelphia residents. Penn will be transferring the operation of the integrated data system to the PAC as part of this development grant and will serve in a consultative capacity.

National recognition of the KIDS model has resulted in Culhane and Fantuzzo obtaining a grant in August 2009 from the MacArthur Foundation to advance integrated data systems-based policy analysis and research as a field of professional practice. Culhane and Fantuzzo will be establishing a national professional network of Integrated Data Systems (IDS). This network will establish standards of best practice for sites with an existing integrated data system and support municipalities and states wanting to develop IDS. They will also be examining the benefit cost of using this network to conduct cross-site research.

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