

# SPAIN

## NATIONAL POLICY BRIEF



The objective of this policy brief is to present the current situation and progress made in family support on behalf of the children's rights in Spain towards achieving quality standards using the quality assurance protocol for family support services developed by the 19 countries participating in the COST Innovators Grant IG18123, QA[4]EuroFam. The aim is to provide key messages on current strengths as well as recommendations to key audiences, bringing relevant views and appraisals from the group of interdisciplinary experts, representatives of various sectors in the field at national level.

### National Working Group

Consensual responses were provided by members of Spanish National Working Group made up of 46 researchers and coordinators of services and social entities at national, regional and local levels in social, education, health, and community sectors.

# 1. Contextualization and characterization of family support in Spain



**Q Definition and understanding of family support:** The Comprehensive National Plan for Family Support (2015) offers various resources to facilitate family functioning and parenting, mainly aimed at supporting motherhood, families with special needs, promoting positive parenting, and improving coordination and evaluations of services. Other plans also target social exclusion, domestic violence, social equality and health promotion. In addition, positive parenting policies have become a priority strategy in family support at national and regional level, as noted in Recommendation Rec(2006)19 (Council of Europe, 2006).

**Q Family support services in context:** There are three administrative levels, General State Administration, Autonomous Communities and Local Corporations, as well as entities of the Third Sector within the Social Action arena. Spain has a Guide to social assistance and services for families 2024 (Ministry of Social Rights, Consumption and Agenda 2030, 2024). Public administrations provide families, through different areas of social services, health, education and legal services, with financial aid or services to fulfil their responsibilities and meet their basic needs, mainly in situations of particular difficulty. In this sense, they attend, above all, to families in situations of risk and lack of protection, from a preventive and reinforcement approach.

**Q Political perspective on family support:** The development of family support policies is generally the responsibility of the central government. The Central Administration of the Government of Spain is responsible for the legislative framework and regulations, for the elaboration of national action plans and for part of the financial support. In turn, as Spain presents a decentralised model, the governments of the Autonomous Communities are responsible for specific legislative regulations, co-financing and the overall organisation of services in their territories. The implementation of the programmes through the provision of support activities is carried out by local administrations through public and private bodies and voluntary sector organisations, with varying degrees of coordination and funding. The fact that responsibility for the management and provision of services rests with the regional governments means that there may be inequalities at territorial level in the systems of support for families.

## 2. Key messages from the National Strengths and Recommendations Report



### Families and Children

#### STRENGTHS

1. A wide range of public support services are available to respond to the specific needs experienced by different types of families. Attention to children is a public obligation derived from the applicable legislative frameworks, both in terms of prevention, preservation and protection, highlighting the recent Law for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence.
2. Spain has equality and inclusion policies for family, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is important that children, adolescents and parental figures are aware of their rights to active participation in different family support settings and services so that they can exercise these rights.
2. All families should have equal access to work-life balance and family support measures, regardless of their background and/or work environment.



### Professionals

#### STRENGTHS

1. There is a growing awareness among practitioners to incorporate evidence-based practices and improve the quality of interventions.
2. There is public recognition for professional teams and services that adopt good practice guidelines to improve the quality of family support.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Professionals need to be trained and resourced to incorporate family-centred models and improve the evaluation of interventions. It is also necessary to guarantee the provision of professional teams in accordance with the ratios of care, guaranteeing working conditions and stability.
2. Coordination mechanisms between professionals from different sectors and levels of administration need to be strengthened, identifying good practices in different sectors and services that can be transferred to others.



## Policymakers

### STRENGTHS

1. Basic coverage of the Minimum Vital Income is available for families in vulnerable situations in order to reduce social inequality and contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.
2. It is worth highlighting the commitment to the adoption of evidence-based professional practices in public services and social entities as a guarantee of quality, which can be valued in contract tenders.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is necessary to facilitate access and completion procedures, as well as to speed up the response to applications for family allowances, especially for vulnerable families.
2. It is necessary to increase funding for public family support services in their attention to diversity with quality in order to guarantee their sustainability and equal access in all territories of the country.



## Academics

### STRENGTHS

1. There is a consolidated track record of trilateral collaboration that has enabled a collaborative transfer plan to be carried out between policy makers, experts and professionals in order to have an impact on the quality of services through a consensual Good Practice Guide.
2. There is a large group of researchers in the country committed to the effective transfer of scientific knowledge in the field of family support through coordinated and continuous training of professionals and institutional advice.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is necessary to continue disseminating and raising awareness of the need to evaluate and incorporate improvement plans to promote quality assurance in public, private and social services.
2. It is necessary to include specialised content on the interprofessional competencies necessary for working with quality families in both undergraduate and/or postgraduate curricula and in the continuing education of working professionals.

### 3. Insights and lessons learned regarding the quality of family support



**1** In the social sphere, the practices carried out by the local administration are based on a children's rights approach and are centred on the promotion of alliances, capacities and strengths in children, adolescents and families, and it is necessary to improve the culture of evaluation in order to provide professionals with the necessary training to incorporate evidence-based interventions and programmes.

**2** In the educational, health and judicial spheres, practices recognise the rights-based approach centred on children, adolescents and families, being aware of the need to adopt common quality standards and inter-professional training, as well as to improve coordination for more integrated care.

**3** The public state provision of services is guaranteed based on regulations, policies, programmes and resources for the care of children and adolescents in their family, gender, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, with certain differences in their variety and funding according to the autonomous communities, which must be equalised for the whole territory.

**4** Along with the state provision of financial assistance accompanied by psycho-educational and community support for families in vulnerable situations, the implementation of family and work reconciliation measures for all families must be improved, as well as facilitating more effective and streamlined management of the various forms of assistance.

**5** The existence of a trajectory of collaboration between researchers-professionals-politicians in the field of parenting has been fundamental to advance in the consensual adoption of quality standards and interprofessional training in all sectors. These advances are key to ensuring that receiving quality care and support is considered a right of children, adolescents and families, accompanied by the necessary social awareness.

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