

## Family support workforce skills: A scope review of books and handbooks



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**EuroFamNet** is a pan-European family support network currently funded as a COST Action by the COST Association aimed to inform family policies and practices towards the ultimate goal of ensuring children's rights and families' well-being. EurofamNet is doing so by building collaborations between researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, children and families, public and private agencies, and general society.

The WG4 is committed to "developing a standardisation framework on skills" and a work task was to analyse the existing professional practice skills to systematise the skills used in the family support field of action. This policy brief presents the results of a review on the family support workforce skills published in handbooks and books (Antunes et al., 2021), which was developed to complement a previous systematic review on the topic (Burgund et al., 2021; Zegarac et al., 2021).

This document is collected within the work of the/produced by EurofamNet **WG4 "Developing a standardisation framework on skills"**.

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### Key messages

Professional family support encompasses a wide range of interventions and human resources. So, the knowledge and the development of family support skills is crucial to effective practice. However, despite that assumption, we found:

- ▶ **A lack of standardised guidelines for family support workforce skills.**
- ▶ **The family support professional skills presented in three main scientific areas: Mental Health, Psychology and Social Work.**
- ▶ **And specific contents about Knowledge Development, Intervention, Research and Practice, and Assessment.**

Related to family support workforce skills some **recommended readings** were selected:

- ▶ Forrester, D., Wilkins, D., & Whittaker, C. (2021). *Motivational interviewing for working with children and families: A practical guide for early intervention and child protection*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- ▶ Patterson, J., Williams, L., Edwards, T., Chamow, L., & Grauf-Grounds, C. (2018). *Essential skills in family therapy: From the first interview to termination* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- ▶ Tomlison, B. (2015). *Family assessment handbook: An introduction and practical guide to family assessment* (4th ed.). Brooks/Cole.
- ▶ Trevithic, P. (2012). *Social work skills and knowledge: A practice handbook* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- ▶ Unwin, P., & Hogg, R. (2012). *Effective social work with children and families: A skills handbook*. Sage.

## Implications

The research we conducted on books and handbooks related to the workforce skills in family support showed a wide range of resources available at the online data bases related to family and intervention but not specifically on family support workers. Nevertheless, some implications can be imparted:

### Policy implications

- ▶ This review of books and handbooks related to the workforce skills in family support somehow failed to determine the list of significant skills for workforce in family support. So, political strategies that value and support the development of the workforce skills in family support are needed as well as their dissemination.

### Practical implications

- ▶ The publication of books or handbooks and the standardised guidelines on the topic is more than needed seeing it also as a specific area of intervention, including professionals from several domains. Nowadays, online publication would be an asset.
- ▶ A list of recommended books on family support skills was made.

### Challenges

- ▶ At the end, a systematisation of a common ground of skills that family support workforce must develop and master may be important, regardless of their professional background.
- ▶ The major challenge is to continue the work on this topic and to overcome the difficulty of gathering scarce and diverse information related to the emergent concept of family support workforce skills.




## Additional References


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