THE EUROPEAN FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Training School

FAMILY SUPPORT SKILLS:
Creating an agenda for family workforce skills research development

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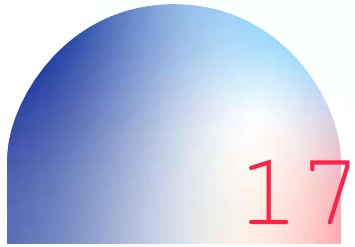
Reflection on the role of public services: assessing the support mechanisms provided by family and parenting services

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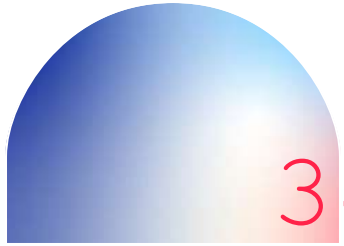
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European Social Network



Member Organisations



Countries

About us

A growing community of public authorities at local, regional and national level and organisations responsible for social services representing more than one million professionals across Europe and beyond.

OUR MEMBERS

Organisations part of ESN:

- Social Services Departments in Public Authorities
- Association of social services Directors
- Providers, NGOs
- Inspection agencies
- Associations of Social Workers
- **Universities, research institutes**



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WHAT WE DO

Leading Social Services



Provide an international exchange and sharing platform for local and regional social services



Strive for a Europe where local and regional social services are genuine partners of the EU



Empower professionals and people using social services by promoting quality in service management

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HOW WE DO IT

- *Exchange* of knowledge and experiences
- *Promote* innovative models in public social services
- *Promote* efficient and effective **social services and social inclusion policies**

✓ Facilitate *exchange* & implementation of *best practice*

✓ Bring policymakers, researchers & practitioners *together*

✓ ***Support* social policy development**

✓ Strengthening *members' capacity*, communications, and impact

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Structure

PART 1

Overview: understanding the role of social services in the family support setting?

PART 2

Provision of the family and parenting support

PART 3

Support mechanism provided by social services

PART 4

Final reflections on the family support skills

PART 5

Practices from ESN

Part 1-Supporting families in a complex situations is one of the core duties of the public services and regional and local level·

Disadvantaged **children, families, and young people** in a range of forms including

- **support for parents**,
- child protection,
- **alternative care arrangements,**
- and supporting vulnerable young people in education, employment or housing as well as in their transition from the care system into adulthoods

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Part 1- What are the groups of children in a situation of vulnerability/disadvantage?

- **Children who are victims of violence or sexual abuse**
- Children with mental health problems, physical disabilities or sensory impairments
- Young offenders
- **Children from minority ethnic groups or from migrant families**
- **Children who have drug addiction problems**
- **Children in institutions and out-of-home care**
- **Children who live in large and single parent families living at or below the poverty line because of not earning enough in their paid employment.**

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Part 1- The parental neglect and domestic violence against children put them in a disadvantage situation

Parents face multiple challenges such as:

- Poverty and social exclusion,
- homeliness,
- disabilities,
- mental or physical health problems or substance-abuse
- Migrant background

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Part 1 – Public social services should work with families

- Protecting children from neglect, violence and abuse is therefore most often best achieved **by helping families to address the wider challenges they face, whether they are chronic circumstances or a short-term crisis.**

- Good social work **cannot be risk-averse**. It must manage and mitigate risk while strengthening conditions to achieve **the long-term best interests of a child**.

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Part 2 - The provision of family support:

At national level:

- In most of the countries **parenting support services** are foreseen by **the national legislation**.

- The provision of parenting services in most countries is designed and planned based on an evaluation.

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Part 2- The provision of family support:

At international and EU level:

- UNCRC is clear: **parents**, legal or customary guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. But so do governments, nongovernmental actors and community-based organizations.
- International **obligations regarding family support services** are set out in UN Guidelines based on the principle of necessity
- International and European law – both EU and Council of Europe (CoE) provide for the right to family and gives the necessary measures how to respect this right.

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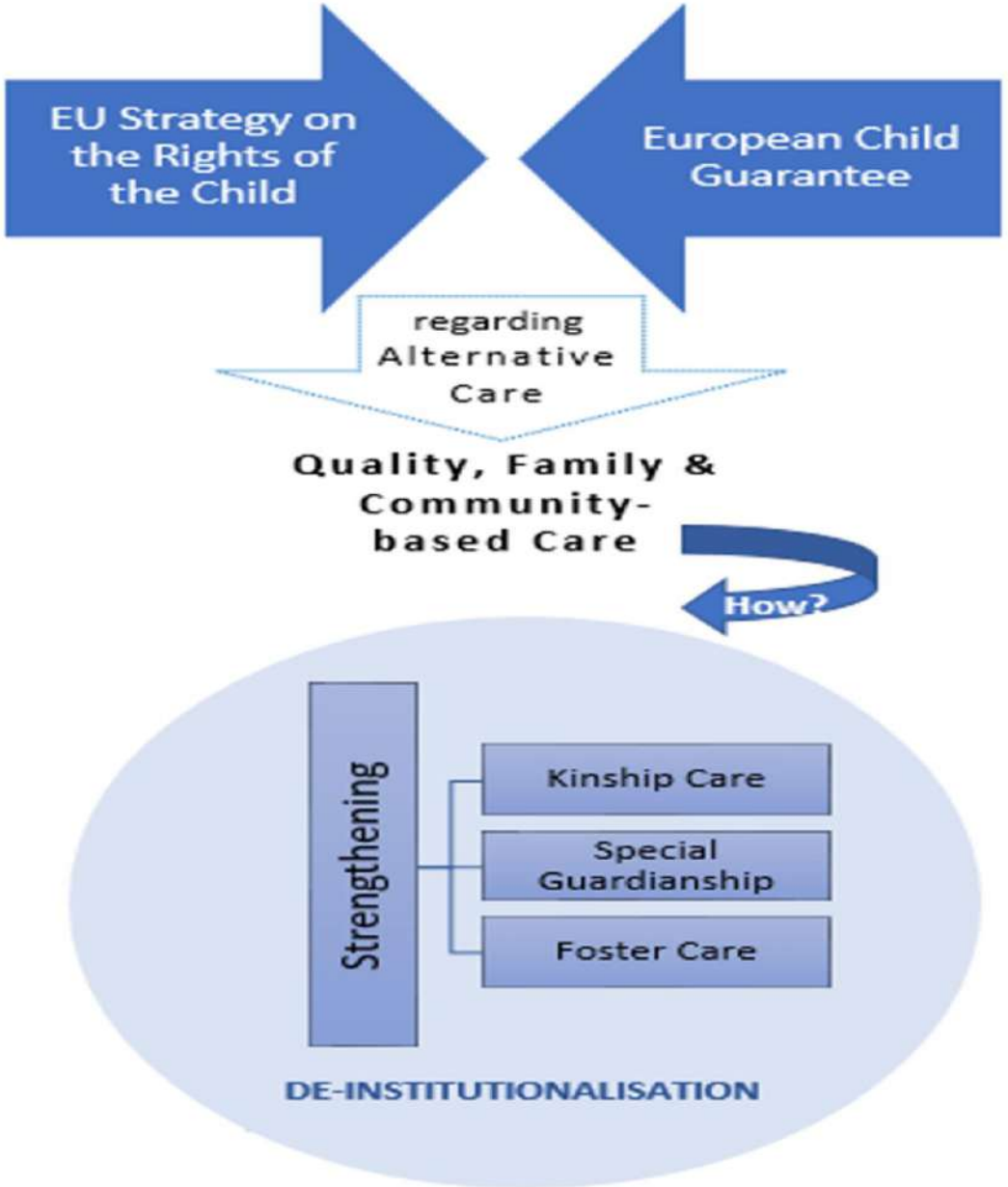
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Part 2 - The provision of parenting services on the alternative care

- EU Child Guarantee mainly in a context of child poverty and social exclusion.
- Commission's recognises the role of family support and the development of community-based services for children and families as crucial elements of **alternative care**.
- COE prepared recommendations for legal standards https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/alternative-care
- UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

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Part 3-Public social services provide a wide variety of family and parenting support mechanisms

Amongst the social support the most important are:

- from early childcare to health prevention and health promotion in the early years to
- “progressive universalism” –when needs are stronger, the provision of services is also stronger
- benefits, and targeted measures (such as free education materials, free school meals and free access to leisure and culture).
- Preventive measures

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Reflections the Family Support -the workforce behind

- Fragmentation of services affect not only vulnerable families but all families

- Complex situations requires joined up approaches:
  - of different services (care, education) **horizontal**,
  - between age related services: transition between (home) and services- **vertical,**
  - of different level of public governance (local, regional, and national), **horizontal and vertical**
- **Specialist social services in the field of child protection** – in cooperation with other **statutory services**, such as health, education and the police – should always undertake a multidisciplinary assessment of the family's situation, parenting skills, their impact on the child and the potential threat to the child.

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Reflections the Family Support -the workforce behind

- Design services to:
    1. **Working with families** (Child protection services (at different government levels) should implement measures around family support, financial benefits, parental support, family mediation and personalised work with children and families)
    2. **With vulnerable children**
    3. **In partnership** 'the coordination of different services is particularly necessary to help children escape from poverty and social exclusion.
    4. **Working for excellence** (It is necessary to ensure the quality of services, and in order to do so, needs assessment, performance management and cost effectiveness should be considered.)
- Address the shortage in the workforce and provide relevant training for all the professionals involved.
- Harmonization of the policies

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Integrated and shared assessment and care plan

Ecological and Multidimensional approach = sharing responsibilities



Social Worker – case manager

Parents' & Children group





TARGET FAMILY



Family support/assistant Home care worker



Psychologist

School /Teachers



Family /Natural Helpers



ESN's current work on the workforce

1. Side by Side – ESN's new project to tackle violence against children

   Study visit in Ireland

   - Tusla (Child and Family Agency) has developed Meitheal as a national early intervention practice model to ensure that the needs and strengths of children and their families are effectively identified, understood and responded to in a timely way so that children and families get the help and support needed to improve children's outcomes and to realise their rights.

   - Training needs assessment

SISSWEC project and EP roundtable on Investing in the Workforce of Social Services

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Practices

Children First (Belgium)

Social workers are integrated into schools through the Children First practice in Ghent.

More comprehensive care for kids and families

Each school staff member has the authority to direct families to the PCSW worker.

Collaborating with schools results in faster and more lasting solutions and allows for the establishment of family-centred integrated care systems

Mothers 4 Mothers (Germany)

In Offenbach County, 16% of children lack access to childcare, and many migrant women struggle to secure their first job.

•Mums@Work project aims to provide social and educational support for young migrant mothers and encourage their successful integration into society

The project facilitates young immigrant moms' access to the labour market and helps them earn a degree to lower or eliminate poverty.

Supporting parents give their children the best start in life (Ireland)

Home visits and programs for first-time parents

Parental Objectives: Greater parental efficacy and knowledge of child development • Better and more stable relationships with their children

Objectives for Children: Improved child-parent attachment and bonding • Improved development outcomes in terms of physical, emotional, and mental health

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Best Practices

The Best for Every Child! (Sweden)

Adopting a child-focused approach to understanding the well-being and needs of a child.

Based on an understanding of the well-being of a child in their current situation and on tackling needs early

Prioritizing the interests of the child over the interests of the service providers.

The Looked After Children Service (Malta)

Establish individual care plan to meet the child's needs

Focus on stability and independence for the child

The goal is to see children return to family homes if in their best interest

Provide continuous support and information for an independent and stable life in society

Early Detection and Intervention for Children (Spain)

Local networks of specialists in education, health, and social services will collaborate to identify at-risk children earlier and offer more comprehensive help.

Goals include helping children access nursery schools and early childhood services, improving parents' competency, promoting children's growth, and encouraging diverse community environments.

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European Social Services Conference

31st European Social Services Conference

Advancing Social Services

The role of Technology in Promoting Autonomy & Inclusion

Malmö, 14 - 16 June 2023





click here to register for the **2023 edition**

Contact Person: **Rioghnach Hyland**, Junior Events Officer, at: conference@esn-eu.org

THANK YOU!

Email: elona.bokshi@esn-eu.org

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