



R.2.1 :

EU Regulatory Framework of evidence-based parenting programmes and best practice report

Smart Parenting Erasmus+ Project/ Grant Agreement: n°2022-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000087853



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Introduction

This document was produced in the framework of the ERASMUS+ programme, KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education under the project entitled: Integrative on-line Parenting Courses: strategies for Raising Children Affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences and within the activity: A.2.1: Desk-based analysis at EU and national level, composing the appropriate project baseline and developing best practices to be applied on the Smart Parenting Model.

The scope of the Smart parenting project is to act like a digital recovery plan aiming to increase parental competences by establishing a comprehensive high-quality online model of parent-support, grounded on the principles of informed decision-making and positive parenting thus contributing to the reduction in short- and long-term trauma-related symptoms of the child, and creating an inclusive environment that fosters equity and equality.

Specific Objectives:

- To foster prevention on potential adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by offering concrete alternatives to abusive and ineffective methods of discipline and control
- To increase knowledge and skills of non-professionals (adult parents) and of adult trainers who will locally deliver high quality evidence-based and online parental education and support in preventing and responding to ACEs. Most importantly parents will learn about the impact of trauma on their child development.
- To provide easy, practical strategies to help parents build strong and healthy relationships with their children prevent problems in the family, school.

In order to meet the above objectives, partners proceeded with an extensive review of the national regulatory frameworks and strategies in the area of parenting support including best practice initiatives, which is a really important step in order to establish a strong and usable project baseline and regulatory framework for the Smart Parenting model setting the background of the actions that will follow.

In the next section of the report, the executive summary is presented. Further, an overview of the EU and international regulatory framework concerning parenting support is exposed and in Part B, the report presents a collection of national regulations referring to parental responsibilities, forms and modalities of parenting support and continues with the presentation of national policies towards investing in children in all participating countries. Finally, Part C provides a general description, evidence of success and constraints of national best practice initiatives that have been proved successful boosters in improving children's physical, emotional and social needs.

Executive Summary

The information presented in this report provides an overview of the international and EU regulatory and policy framework on parenting support, and continues with the analysis of the parental responsibilities in France, Greece, Spain, Slovenia and Cyprus, concrete forms and modalities of parenting support, and national strategies towards investing in children, in order to establish a usable project baseline and framework for the Smart Parenting training model. It also describes relevant examples and practical experiences from the parental support field and offers lessons for improving children's physical, emotional and social needs. Through the identification of a wide range of initiatives and best practice examples (content elements of success, constraints, references) the deliverable is meant to prove a source of inspiration that can stimulate a positive parent-child interaction, and raise awareness on effective parenting interventions, needed to optimize child and family well-being. It can also be used as an advocacy tool and resource for understanding what promotes effective, sensitive and responsive child rearing and caring practices.

Partners and countries involved:

- Commune d' Oletta (France)
- Institut Corse De Formation Et Recherche En Travail Social (IFRTS): France
- European Knowledge Spot (EKS): Greece
- GESEME (Spain)
- Zavod za izobraževanje odraslih in mladine Lendava (Slovenia)
- Association for the Prevention and Handling Violence in the Family (Cyprus)

In particular, the report demonstrates that in all Partner countries, when it comes to family law, there is a strong supportive legal system that recognizes the comprehensive nature of parenting responsibilities, and encompass care/medical treatment, protection, education, legal representation, determination of residence, and administration of property to safeguard the well-being and development of children. It is also true that most forms of parenting support in the participating countries include social – health – psychological – educational related programmes to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibilities and promoting the well-being of their children. They also encompass measures that provide financial support for families (allowances, grants, subsidies and services), measures to increase the employment of women; provision of certain incentives in order to support families to achieve a reconciliation between family and working life, to ensure solidarity between generations, and to achieve an increase in fertility.

When it comes to the best practice cases included in the report, it is worth mentioning that all ten (10) initiatives presented by the five participating countries – France, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, and Cyprus, can serve as a basis to promote positive parenting practices, support parenting involvement and improve parenting engagement. The cases identified include, national initiatives and tools supporting parenting and assisting with childcare, national training programs to improve parenting skills and course of action with both children and adolescents

as well as initiatives facilitating positive transitions to adulthood.

Further, most cases presented, revealed that parents who are attending parenting educational programmes can see improvements in parental knowledge of positive discipline strategies, social-emotional development and more positive parent-child interactions improved communication, reduced conflict, and enhanced parent-child relationship. Accordingly, national initiatives such as family, counselling centers and help lines services have also provided valuable support (material, psychological, medical support etc.) to parents while at the same time strengthened their parenting skills.

On another note, the best parenting practices also revealed some challenges which can be summarized as follows :

- Awareness and accessibility: Ensuring widespread awareness of the programs and its benefits can increase participation rates. Reaching all parents, including those from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds is a real challenge as most of them may not be familiar with the programs or its advantages. Raising awareness about the program and making it accessible to diverse populations, including disadvantaged or marginalized communities, is also a significant challenge.
- Sustainability: Maintaining long-term engagement and follow-up support for parents after the programs conclude can be challenging, as ongoing reinforcement and practice of positive discipline strategies are crucial. In addition, ensuring long-term commitment and support from policymakers, securing ongoing funding, and integrating parenting programmes into existing policies and services are essential for program sustainability
- Parental Resistance: Some parents may initially resist or be hesitant to adopt new discipline approaches, especially if they are accustomed to more traditional or punitive methods. Overcoming this resistance requires effective communication and ongoing support.
- Training and Capacity Building: Implementing parental support programmes requires trained professionals who can effectively deliver the program to parents. Providing comprehensive training to practitioners and building their capacity to deliver the programs with fidelity and cultural competence can be a logistical challenge.
- Stigma and Parental Engagement: Engaging parents in parenting programs can be challenging due to various factors, including the stigma associated with seeking help or participating in such programs. Overcoming barriers related to stigma promoting a positive perception of seeking parenting support, and encouraging parental engagement can be a significant hurdle.

PART A: International and EU regulatory and policy frameworks for parenting support

Parenting support can be defined as the provision of services aimed at enhancing parenting skills and practices in order to address children's physical, emotional and social needs. In Europe, parenting support is seen as a potential lever to improve educational outcomes and reduce the risk of criminal behaviour, and parenting skills are seen as drivers in the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

Parenting appears in a range of international and European policies and frameworks concerned with family policy but mostly lies within the responsibilities of individual Member States. In the same line, reviews of family policy, family and parenting support often focus on national-level contexts and reforms. This reflects the primary significance of national frameworks and contexts to the ways in which family policy and family support are conceived, developed, delivered and regulated. However, wider European and global perspectives are also important not least because everyday childhood and family relationships for many are trans-national in nature. The most significant supranational legislative and policy developments in parenting and family policy are adopted by the UN, CoE and EU and are mentioned below:

- The International Bill of Rights¹ and its emphasis on rights to economic support, employment support, healthcare and education, and social services for children, parents and families.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC²): The Convention explains who children are, all their rights to protection, provision and participation and the responsibilities of governments.
- UN agencies and campaigns (including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda) promote family-friendly policies (UNICEF, 2019).
- The CoE's 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the 1961/1996 European Social Charters (ESC/RESC), which incorporate significant emphasis on the provision of family support
- The CoE's 2006 (19) Recommendation on policy to support positive parenting, 2011 (12) Recommendation on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families and its Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)
- The EU 2017 Social Pillar of Rights and the 2021 European Child Guarantee, explicitly promote improved rights to time-related, resource-related and service-related policies

¹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

² The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and is the most widely adopted international human rights treaty in history.

and provisions for children, parents and families as envisaged by COFACE (2019) and UNICEF (2019)

- The EU's 2013 Recommendation on investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage and 2017 European Pillar of Social Rights

Nonetheless, traditionally the EU has provided limited direction to family policy as a matter primarily dealt with by member states.

PART B: National parental regulations and policies towards investing in children

The Case of France

Overview of the French Legal Framework Referring to Parental Responsibilities

In France, parental responsibility is regulated by the Civil Code, which defines the responsibilities and obligations of parents towards their children. Parents are legally responsible for the physical, moral and intellectual development of their children until they reach the age of majority (18 years old). This refers to the French legal concept of “autorité parentale” which is a collection of rights and duties aimed at the interests of the child. It includes care and protection, determining the child’s residence, education, legal representation, and civil liability. Parents have a duty to protect their children’s safety, health, and moral values, to educate them, and to ensure their personal development while respecting them as individuals. Mothers and fathers have the right and duty of supervision and must meet children’s daily needs. They are responsible for deciding the child’s religious orientation and medical treatment. Parents must contribute to the maintenance and education of children in proportion to their means and the child’s needs. Art. 371-1 French CC defines the parental authority, and it belongs to both parents until the child reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.

The concept of parental authority in the French legal system includes various aspects that aim to safeguard the best interests of the child. These aspects include:

- Care and Protection: Parents have a duty to provide care and protection to their children, ensuring their safety, health, and overall well-being.
- Maintenance of Personal Relationships: Parents are responsible for fostering and maintaining personal relationships between the child and both parents, even in cases of separation or divorce.
- Provision of Education: Parents have the obligation to ensure their child's education, which encompasses schooling, vocational training, moral development, and civic life. They have the authority to make decisions regarding the child's educational path.
- Legal Representation: As statutory representatives, parents act as legal representatives of their children in civil matters. They have the authority to make legal decisions on behalf of their children, including signing contracts or engaging in legal proceedings.
- Determination of Residence: Parents are responsible for determining the child's place of habitual residence, particularly in cases of separation.

They must ensure suitable housing arrangements for the child, either within their own households or with a third party.

- Administration of Property: Parents may administer the child's property and assets, ensuring their proper management until the child reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.

These elements collectively form the framework of parental responsibilities in France. They emphasize the importance of parental involvement in the child's life, protection of their well-being, and decision-making authority. The French legal system places great significance on parental authority to ensure the holistic development and welfare of children.

It is important to note that the concept of parental responsibilities may also be influenced by international conventions and agreements ratified by France, such as those established by the Council of Europe, which emphasize the rights and best interests of children.

Overall, the French legal system recognizes the comprehensive nature of parental responsibilities, encompassing care, protection, education, legal representation, determination of residence, and administration of property to safeguard the well-being and development of children

Forms and Modalities of Parenting Support in France:

There are various forms and modalities of parenting support available in France. Some of the most common services include:

- Social Services: Social services play a crucial role in providing support to families in need. They offer a range of services such as counseling, financial assistance, housing support, and access to social benefits. These services aim to address social challenges that families may face, including poverty, unemployment, and housing instability, to ensure a stable and nurturing environment for children.
- Care Services: Care services encompass a wide range of support systems, including child care centers, preschools, and after-school programs. These services not only provide a safe and supervised environment for children but also contribute to their socialization, cognitive development, and early education. Care services also offer respite care for parents, allowing them to balance work and family responsibilities effectively.
- Psychological Services: Psychological services focus on providing support to families dealing with emotional and psychological challenges. This may include individual or family counseling, therapy sessions, and mental health interventions. These services aim to enhance parental well-being, strengthen parent-child relationships and address any mental health issues that may impact family dynamics.
- Health Interventions: Health-related interventions for parents and families cover a broad spectrum, including prenatal care, postnatal support, vaccinations, and health education. These interventions aim to ensure the physical well-being of both parents and children. Additionally, health services provide guidance on child nutrition, hygiene practices, and preventive measures to promote a healthy lifestyle for the entire family. In this framework the following services are provided:
 - Maternal and Child Health Centres (PMI): PMI is a public service that provides free medical, social and psychological support to pregnant women, mothers and their children aged 0-6 years

- Early Childhood Intervention (ECE): ECE services are provided by professionals (such as psychologists, speech therapists, and educators) to support families with young children who have developmental delays or disabilities³
- Parental Education and Support Programs: Parental education programs play a significant role in supporting parents in their role as caregivers and educators. These programs offer workshops, training sessions, and resources on various aspects of parenting, including child development, positive discipline techniques, effective communication, and fostering a nurturing home environment. Parental education programs aim to empower parents with knowledge and skills that can enhance their parenting practices. These programs are offered by local authorities or private organizations to help parents develop positive parenting skills, improve their relationships with their children, and promote child development⁴

Here some examples of parental education and support programs :

- "Parentalité et Handicap" program offered by the organization "Association des Parents et Futurs Parents d'Enfants Handicapés" (APF France Handicap). This program provides support and education to parents of children with disabilities, helping them develop the skills and knowledge necessary to support their child's physical, emotional and social needs. The program includes workshops, training sessions, and support groups for parents, as well as individual consultations with professionals in the field of disability. The program also focuses on building a support network for parents, providing them with the opportunity to connect with other parents of children with disabilities and share their experiences and challenges. The aim of this program is to improve the well-being of both children and parents and promote a positive and inclusive environment for families with disabilities.⁵

- The "Relais Assistantes Maternelles" (RAM) program in France provides support to parents who choose to use an "assistante maternelle" (a registered childminder) to care for their child. RAMs offer resources, advice, and training to both parents and childminders to ensure the best possible care for the child. The program is run by local authorities and is free of charge for parents.⁶

- Family allowances : monthly economic support for anyone who is financially responsible for the maintenance of his or her legitimate, natural, adoptive, or even hosted children, once they are under his or her responsibility. This program delivers different amount of allowance monthly based on the financial situation of the child/children care giver⁷
- Mental Health Services : Mental health services provide support to parents who are struggling with mental health issues that affect their parenting⁸

Strategies and Policies towards investing in children

In France, child, family, and parental policies are an essential part of the social welfare system. The government has implemented various models, action plans, and recent developments to support the well-being of children and families.

³ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/france/organisation-centre-based-ecec>

⁴ <https://www.expatica.com/fr/education/children-education/french-education-system-101147/>

⁵ <https://www.afeh.net/#:~:text=L'AFEH%20est%20l'association,et%20le%20type%20de%20handicap.>

⁶ <https://devenirassmat.com/relais-assistantes-maternelles-atout-metier/>

⁷ <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N156?lang=en>

⁸ <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/maladies-et-traumatismes/sante-mentale>

- One of the key policies in France is the Family Policy, which aims to promote equal opportunities and well-being for all families. It encompasses a range of measures and benefits such as family allowances, parental leave, and access to affordable childcare. The objective is to support families in their daily lives and ensure the best possible conditions for raising children. Some of the most notable policies include:
- Parental Leave : France provides generous parental leave policies, which allow parents to take time off work to care for their children.⁹
- Early Childhood Education and Care : France has a strong tradition of providing high-quality early childhood education and care services to children aged 0-6 years¹⁰
- Family Support Services : The French government provides a range of family support services to help families with young children, including financial support, child care subsidies, and social and psychological support¹¹
- Early Childhood Education and Care : France has a strong tradition of providing high-quality early childhood education and care services to children aged 0-6 years
- The National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents. The Plan is another significant policy framework. It outlines strategic goals and measures to protect children's rights, improve their living conditions, and ensure their development and well-being. The plan includes actions related to education, health, social inclusion, and child protection. It involves various ministries, local authorities, and stakeholders responsible for its implementation. One example of a National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents in France is the "Stratégie nationale de prévention et de protection de l'enfance" (National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Childhood).
- The "Stratégie nationale de prévention et de protection de l'enfance" (National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Childhood). This plan was launched by the French government with the aim of ensuring the well-being and protection of children and adolescents across the country. The National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Childhood¹² focuses on several key areas, including child protection, early childhood development, education, health, and social inclusion. It sets out specific objectives and actions to address the challenges faced by children and adolescents in these areas. The plan aims to strengthen child protection measures and systems to prevent and respond to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It emphasizes the importance of early intervention and support for families, with a focus on promoting positive parenting practices and providing assistance to vulnerable families. In terms of early childhood development, the plan seeks to enhance access to quality early childhood education and care services. It emphasizes the importance of early learning, health, and well-being for young children and aims to improve the coordination and quality of services in this area. The National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Childhood also recognizes the significance of education for children and adolescents. It promotes inclusive education, ensuring equal opportunities for all children to access quality education and support their personal development. Additionally, the plan addresses the health needs of children and adolescents, aiming to improve healthcare services, mental health

⁹ <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F3156?lang=en>

¹⁰ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/early-childhood-education-and-care>

¹¹ https://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france/an_4.html

¹² <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/human-rights/children-s-rights/>

support, and prevention programs. It recognizes the importance of providing comprehensive healthcare and addressing specific health issues faced by young people. Social inclusion is another key aspect of the National Action Plan, aiming to reduce disparities and ensure the inclusion of all children and adolescents in society. It focuses on promoting social participation, equal opportunities, and combating discrimination. The plan sets specific goals and targets for each area, along with a timeline for implementation. It involves collaboration between various government ministries, local authorities, civil society organizations, and stakeholders working in the field of child and adolescent welfare. Through the National Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Childhood, France aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment for children and adolescents, ensuring their well-being, development, and protection throughout their lives.

- National Observatory for Childhood: The National Observatory for Childhood is responsible for monitoring and evaluating policies and initiatives related to children and young people.¹³ Overall, these policies and services demonstrate France's commitment to investing in children and supporting parents in their important role as caregivers and nurturers.

In recent years, France has also focused on strengthening parental involvement and support. Parental education programs have been developed to provide guidance and resources to parents, helping them acquire effective parenting skills and promoting positive parent-child relationships. These programs are often offered through community centers, schools, and healthcare institutions.

Furthermore, France has established institutions and bodies responsible for child and family policies. The Ministry of Solidarity and Health plays a crucial role in formulating and implementing policies related to child welfare, health, and social services. The Ministry of National Education focuses on education policies and initiatives for children and adolescents. Additionally, regional and local authorities work closely with these ministries to ensure the effective implementation of policies at the local level.

Recent developments in France have also emphasized the importance of early childhood development. Investments have been made in expanding access to quality early childhood education and care, recognizing the crucial role it plays in children's overall development and future success.

Overall, France's child, family, and parental policies reflect a commitment to supporting families, promoting child well-being, and ensuring equal opportunities for all children. These policies and initiatives aim to provide comprehensive support and resources to families, strengthen parental involvement, and create a nurturing environment for children to thrive.

The Case of Slovenia

Overview of the Slovenian Legal Framework Referring to Parental Responsibilities

¹³ <https://www.esn-eu.org/members/national-observatory-child-protection-france>

Parental responsibility is a legal relationship governed by family law. Relations begin with the birth of a child or the determination of paternity and maternity. The legal basis is provided by Article 54 of the Slovenian Constitution (Ustava Republike Slovenije), according to which parents have the right and duty to maintain, educate and raise their children. This right and responsibility may be revoked or restricted only for reasons set out in law to protect the child's interests. In the Family Code, (a Slovenian code that covers the reform of family law) parental responsibility is defined as the entire set of rights and duties that parents have to create the conditions, to the best of their ability, for ensuring their child's comprehensive development. Parental responsibility is shared between the two parents.

Parents must safeguard their child's interests in all activities about the child and, when raising their child, respect their person, individuality and dignity. Parents take precedence over all others when it comes to caring for their children and exercising responsibility for working in the child's interests. Parents are deemed to be working in their child's interests if, by taking into account the child's personality, age, level of development and desires in particular, they meet the child's material, emotional and psychosocial needs by acting in a way that demonstrates their care and responsibility towards the child, provide them with adequate guidance and encourage their development (Family Code).

The national Family Code also covers and defines the following acts: care and protection, maintenance of personal relationships, provision of education, legal representation, determination of residence, and administration of property. Parental care is the obligations and rights of parents that relate to care for the child's life and health, his upbringing, protection and care, control over the child and care for his education, as well as the obligations and rights of parents that relate to representation and support the child and the management of his property. Parents must care for the life and health of their child, and protect, nurture, raise and supervise them. The child has the right to contact both parents and both parents have the right to contact the child. Contacts ensure the benefits of the child. Parents who do not live or will no longer live together shall agree on contact. Preventing contact with the child by one parent is prohibited as long as the contact is for the benefit of the child. If the parents cannot agree on the contacts, the Center for Social Work intervenes first, and then the court. Parents need to ensure that their child can be schooled and educated in line with their abilities, talents and wishes. They must support their children until the age of 18 or the support is extended if the child is in education (until the age of 26 at the latest). A child's property is managed for his benefit by his parents. The parent to whom the child is entrusted with care and upbringing shall decide on issues of the child's daily life and the child's permanent residence, provided that this does not interfere with issues that significantly affect the child's development.

Forms and Modalities of Parenting Support in Slovenia

The Family Code also defines family support programs and their financing. Family support programs are aimed at preparing for parenthood, promoting positive parenting and strengthening parental competencies, psychosocial support for children and parents and other content to improve the quality of family life. Family support programmes are long-term, free-of-charge and widely accessible programmes that are based on modern concepts of support and (self-)help. Family support programs that are financed through tenders by the Directorate for Families of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: a) a

representative of the family (offers the family of children with special needs a conversation and information about programs to support the family); b) family centers (they provide educational and practical workshops on developing skills in positive parenting, carry out holiday activities for children, and organize occasional childcare); c) multi-generational centers (providing a range of daily activities enabling participants to obtain skills and knowledge they can use in their work and everyday lives).

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities also supports implementing various other programs to empower parents in raising children. These are for example The Incredible Years (a proven effective tool in preventing and reducing behavioural problems), which is placed among the services in the Centers for Mental Health of Children and Adolescents within the framework of primary health care. The Ministry of Health funds The Strengthening Families Program, which is a prevention program for families with younger/elementary school children who have found themselves in difficulties, as well as for families who would like to empower themselves to more easily continue life with their growing children. They are carried out by the Centers for social work and various non-governmental organizations.

According to the Social Assistance Act, the Centres for social work provide social welfare services aimed at preventing social distress and problems (social prevention), including activities and assistance for self-help for individuals, families and population groups. They also implement programs for families, such as “Non-Professional Family Assistance” (intended for dysfunctional families with primary school children, i.e., families that have problems).

Public health education institutions and private ones carry a health-related program “School for parents/maternity school”, which is intended for the pregnant woman and her partner in preparation for childbirth, the postpartum period, and the care and nutrition of the newborn.

Strategies and Policies Towards Investing in Children

Family policy in Slovenia is defined by two laws. The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act regulates insurance for parental care, family benefits, conditions and procedure for exercising individual rights, while the Family Code regulates marriage, relationships between family members and other relatives, adoption, foster care and the care of minor children and other persons who lack the capacity to take care of themselves, their rights and benefits.

Family policy in Slovenia pays special attention to the care and protection of children and pursues the best interests of children. The state ensures the implementation of children's rights to the maximum extent possible and carefully monitors their situation. To ensure a quality, healthy and safe childhood and good opportunities for successful development in all areas, the state takes care of a functioning and efficient system of family protection, and at the same time adopts appropriate educational, health and other programs and measures that ensure the well-being of children. In 2006, Slovenia adopted the Program for Children and Youth 2006-2016, which comprehensively and comprehensively deals with the issue of the situation of children and youth. In 2013, it updated this program for the period 2013-2016 and in 2020 for the period 2020-2025.

The purpose of the Resolution on family policy 2018–2028 "A society that is friendly to all families" (hereinafter referred to as the resolution) is to define key goals and measures for ten years that will further increase the level of quality of family life, ensure the protection, protection and well-

being of families, especially children and improved the socio-economic situation of families. Pursuing goals and consistently implementing measures could thus create social circumstances and an environment that will have a stimulating influence on decision-making for children. The resolution focuses on nine priority areas, namely: family support programs, parental care and family benefits, substitute child care, family social care, balancing professional and family life, labour market and employment, the field of healthcare and healthcare, the field of education.

The resolution defines these fundamental objectives: improving the quality of family life with an emphasis on the high level of quality of life of children; ensuring protection and protection of families and individual family members, especially children; creating conditions that will stimulate decision-making for the family.

To more effectively achieve these goals, the state has developed a model of family support programs, which focus on various forms of assistance to families and in a certain way represent a complement to other programs and services, such as, for example, social welfare programs and services. Family support programs differ from social welfare programs in their focus on the family, which in modern society is exposed to increasing pressures, expectations and risks, as a result of which it needs various forms of support. The programs are primarily aimed at children, young people and their families, positively improve the quality of life of individuals and families, and reduce various risks. They are mainly focused on preventive activities and programs.

Family support programs are explicitly defined in the Family Code. Funding for the programs is provided based on public tenders, namely for a maximum of five years. Programs and projects aimed at children and families are also implemented by other departments. The state must provide a wide range of quality programs and projects that are widely accessible. Departments that design and implement programs and projects aimed at families must connect and invite the professional public, non-governmental organizations, etc. to participate.

In 2021, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia approved the Action Plan for the implementation of the Children's Program 2020-2025. The accompanying action plan for the implementation of the Children's Program 2020-2025 includes priority areas, within which activities will be carried out to increase the quality of life of children and to establish protective factors for children from socially and economically weak backgrounds, for the most vulnerable children, and protective factors in the areas, which are required by modern times with their challenges, such as the digital environment.

The Case of Spain

Overview of the Spanish Legal Framework Referring to Parental Responsibilities

In Spain, the legal framework referring to parental responsibilities is primarily governed by the Civil Code and other relevant laws. These laws outline the rights and obligations of parents towards their children, including matters related to custody, visitation, education, and support. Here is an overview of the national legal framework in Spain concerning parental responsibilities:

- **Parental Authority:** Parental authority refers to the set of rights and obligations that parents have towards their children. It includes the duty to care for, protect, and educate the child. Both parents typically share parental authority unless there are exceptional circumstances where it is deemed in the best interest of the child to grant sole parental authority to one parent.
- **Custody:** Custody determines where the child resides and who is responsible for their day-to-day care. In Spain, there are two types of custody:

a. **Joint Custody:** Joint custody, also known as shared custody, is the preferred option in Spain. It involves both parents sharing the physical and legal custody of the child. Joint custody allows both parents to participate in making important decisions regarding the child's upbringing, education, healthcare, and religion.

b. **Sole Custody:** Sole custody is awarded to one parent when it is determined to be in the best interest of the child. The non-custodial parent may still have visitation rights, but the custodial parent has primary responsibility for the child's upbringing and daily care.

- **Visitation and Contact:** Even if one parent has sole custody, the non-custodial parent typically has the right to maintain a relationship with the child. Visitation rights, also known as "visitas" in Spanish, allow the non-custodial parent to spend time with the child at specified intervals. The court may establish a visitation schedule or leave it to the parents to agree upon.
- **Child Support:** Both parents are legally obligated to financially support their child. The amount of child support is determined based on various factors, including the income of the parents, the needs of the child, and the standard of living they would have enjoyed if the parents were living together. In Spain, child support is typically paid by the non-custodial parent to the custodial parent.
- **Modification and Enforcement:** The legal framework allows for the modification of custody, visitation, and child support arrangements if there are significant changes in circumstances or if it is in the best interest of the child. Additionally, mechanisms exist to enforce parental responsibilities, and non-compliance can lead to legal consequences.

It's important to note that specific procedures and requirements may vary depending on the autonomous community in Spain, as certain regions have their own family law regulations.

Forms and Modalities of Parenting Support in Spain.

In Spain, there are various forms and modalities of parenting support available to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibilities and promoting the well-being of their children. These support services aim to provide guidance, education, and resources to parents, fostering positive parenting practices. Here are some common forms and modalities of parenting support in Spain:

- **Parenting Education Programs:** These programs offer workshops, courses, or seminars that provide parents with knowledge and skills to enhance their parenting abilities. They may cover a wide range of topics, including child development, communication, discipline strategies, and building healthy relationships. Parenting education programs are often offered by community centers, schools, family associations, and government agencies.

- Family Support Centers: Family support centers, known as "Centros de Apoyo a las Familias" or "Centros de Acción Social" in Spanish, provide a variety of services to support families. These centers offer counseling, guidance, and practical assistance to parents and children. They may also organize support groups, parenting workshops, and recreational activities for families.
- Parent Support Groups: Parent support groups bring together parents facing similar challenges or situations. These groups provide a safe and supportive environment for parents to share experiences, exchange advice, and learn from one another. Support groups can be facilitated by professionals, such as psychologists or social workers, or organized by parent associations and non-profit organizations.
- Online Resources and Websites: There are numerous online resources and websites available in Spain that offer information, articles, and tools on parenting. These resources cover a wide range of topics and can provide parents with guidance on various aspects of parenting, such as child development, positive discipline, and fostering healthy relationships. Some websites also offer forums or online communities where parents can connect and seek support from other parents.
- Helplines and Hotlines: Helplines and hotlines are available to provide immediate assistance and support to parents in need. These services are typically staffed by trained professionals who can offer guidance, information, and referrals to appropriate resources. They can address a wide range of parenting concerns, from general inquiries to more specific issues related to child behavior, mental health, or family dynamics.
- Social Services and Child Protection Agencies: Social services and child protection agencies in Spain play a crucial role in supporting families and ensuring the well-being of children. These agencies can provide assessments, interventions, and case management services for families experiencing difficulties. They may offer counseling, home visits, and referrals to specialized services as needed.

The availability and specific offerings of parenting support may vary depending on the region or municipality within Spain.

Here some examples of parental education and support programs :

- "Escuela de Familias" (School for Families): This program is organized by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality. It offers workshops and training sessions for parents on various topics, including positive parenting, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. The program is typically offered through schools, community centers, and social services.
- "Programa de Apoyo a las Familias" (Family Support Program): This program is implemented by regional governments and local municipalities throughout Spain. It provides a range of services and resources to support families, including parenting workshops, counseling, home visits, and social assistance. The program aims to enhance parenting skills, strengthen family relationships, and promote child well-being.
- "Educar en Positivo" (Positive Parenting): This initiative is promoted by the Spanish Federation of Large Families (FEFN) and focuses on promoting positive parenting techniques. It offers workshops and training sessions for parents on positive discipline, effective communication, emotional intelligence, and building strong parent-child relationships. The program aims to foster a positive and nurturing environment for children.
- "Programa de Educación Familiar" (Family Education Program): This program is organized by the National Institute of Family Policy (INPF) in collaboration with local

entities. It offers parenting courses and workshops covering various aspects of child-rearing, such as child development, education, health, and emotional well-being. The program aims to provide parents with practical skills and knowledge to support their children's development.

- "Programa de Apoyo Psicosocial a las Familias" (Psychosocial Support Program for Families): This program is run by social services departments in many municipalities across Spain. It offers individual and group counseling for parents, addressing a wide range of family-related issues, including parenting challenges, relationship dynamics, and child behavior. The program provides emotional support, guidance, and practical strategies to help parents navigate difficult situations.

Strategies and Policies Towards Investing in Children

Spain has implemented several national strategies and policies aimed at investing in children and promoting their well-being. These initiatives focus on ensuring the holistic development, protection, and equal opportunities for all children in the country. Here are some key national strategies and policies in Spain concerning children:

- National Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence: The National Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence is a comprehensive framework that outlines the government's priorities and actions to promote the rights and well-being of children and adolescents. It focuses on areas such as health, education, social protection, participation, and non-discrimination. The strategy aims to improve the quality of life for children and ensure their active participation in decision-making processes.
- National Strategic Plan for The Reduction of Childhood Obesity (2022 - 2030): With this Plan, Spain wants to make it easier for children and adolescents to grow up healthy, without barriers that make it more difficult for them regardless of their social or territorial origin. That is the plan: to build a healthier Spain in which growing up healthy is a right for children and adolescents.
- Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Spain has made significant efforts to invest in early childhood education and care. The country provides a network of public and private ECEC centers that offer early education, care, and support for children from birth to six years old. The government has prioritized accessibility, affordability, and quality in ECEC services to ensure equal opportunities for all children.
- Child Protection and Welfare: Spain has implemented policies and measures to protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The country has a legal framework in place that prioritizes the best interests of the child. Child protection services work to prevent child maltreatment, provide support to at-risk families, and ensure the prompt intervention and care for children in need of protection.
- Inclusive Education: Spain promotes inclusive education policies to ensure that children with disabilities and special educational needs have access to quality education in mainstream schools. The government has established support mechanisms, including specialized teachers, individualized education plans, and assistive technologies, to facilitate the inclusion of all children in the education system.
- Child Poverty Reduction: Spain has implemented measures to address child poverty and social exclusion. The government provides financial assistance through social welfare programs, such as the Minimum Income Scheme (Ingreso Mínimo Vital), to support families with children who are at risk of poverty. These initiatives aim to alleviate the

impact of poverty on children's well-being and provide them with the necessary resources for their development.

- Promotion of Children's Rights: Spain is committed to upholding children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The government promotes awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and advocacy efforts to ensure the rights of children are respected, protected, and fulfilled across all sectors.

The Case of Greece

Overview of the Hellenic Legal Framework Referring to Parental Responsibilities

Under Greek law, parental responsibility (term usually equals to legal custody in different legal systems) on the minor child, namely a child under eighteen (18) years of age, is both a right and a responsibility of the parents, who, in principle, (have to) exercise it in common. Parental responsibility includes not only (physical) custody of the child, but also administration of the child's estate and child's legal representation in all its affairs. Custody entails, mainly but not exclusively, the upbringing / raising, supervision, education and training of the child, as well as the determination of the child's residence. Parental responsibility is awarded, therefore, to both parents at the child's birth and will not be withdrawn from one or both of them, save in exceptional circumstances.

In particular as regard the Hellenic legal framework, the Hellenic Constitution guarantees the protection of the institution of the family. Article 21. para.1 stipulates that the family as the foundation of the preservation and promotion of the nation, as well as marriage, motherhood and childhood are under the protection of the State. The State shall also ensure that all citizens are guaranteed a decent living condition through a minimum guaranteed income system, as prescribed by law. The Constitution also makes specific reference to the protection of large families from the State. The protection of the family is supplemented by Article 9(9)(1)(b).1, which guarantees the inviolability of the private and family life of the individual. Furthermore, the provision of Article 4 para. 2 provides for the equality of the two genders.

In addition, the Hellenic Civil Code and particularly Art. 1505-1541 (Relations between Parents and their children), 1589-1654 (Guardianship) and 1655-1665 (Foster Care), constitute the main source of law for parental responsibilities. European legislative framework, as well as International Conventions influence the interpretation of these provisions, complement the relevant legal framework and, in the case of conflict of laws, they prevail as *leges superiores*.

With regard to the attributions of parental responsibilities these are exercised "jointly and equally", which means equal exercise of parental responsibility, to restore the hitherto disturbed balance between ex-spouses. Informatively, until the publication of the new law (4800/2021), Greek courts generally ruled in favour of mothers in child custody trials. In addition, the parent who has sole custody is obliged to obtain an opinion from the other parent, according to the new provision of article 1519 of the Civil Code.

If neither parent is able to exercise parental responsibility, a minor child is placed under guardianship (Art. 1590 Greek CC); the parents retain parental responsibility, as simple holders of the right, while being unable to exercise it.

According to the Hellenic Civil Code, parental responsibility is a right and an obligation of parents. It covers caring for the physical care of the child and its upbringing, managing the child's property and representing the child in any matter, transaction or litigation that concerns the child or the child's property. More specifically the content of parental responsibilities according to the civil law can be summarized as follows:

- Care¹⁴: The care of the person of the child comprises in particular the upbringing, supervision, education and instruction of the child as well as the determination of its place of domicile. In raising the child, the parents must support it without distinction as to gender in developing responsibly and with social awareness its personality
- Education¹⁵: Concerning the education and the professional training of the child article 1518 and 1606 of the Hellenic CC stipulates that parents shall take into consideration its capabilities and personal inclinations. For this purpose, they must cooperate with the school authorities and if necessary, request the concurrence of the competent State departments or public bodies.
- Disciplinary measures and corporal punishment¹⁶: Taking and imposing measures of compulsion shall only be allowed if these are pedagogically necessary and do not cause injury to the child's dignity. Corporal punishment conflicts with both of these criteria, and is thus not justifiable. Law (3500/2006, Article 4, "Physical violence against minors") also specifically criminalizes the exercise of any corporal punishment whatsoever onto children. Hence corporal punishment is unlawful in all settings, including the home.
- Medical treatment¹⁷: Medical treatment forms part of the duty of care. Thus, the holders of parental responsibilities are entitled to make the relevant decisions on behalf of the child. In case of an urgent need of medical intervention with a view of averting a threat to the life or health of the child the public prosecutor sitting at the Court of first instance may on the refusal of the parents give himself immediately the required permission following a request by the medical doctor in charge of the treatment or by the director of the clinic where the child is under treatment or by any other competent health authority.
- Legal representation. The holders of parental responsibilities represent the child in any matter regarding his person or his property (Art. 1510 para. 1 and 1603 Greek CC). Legal transactions which the minor of a certain age is entitled to enter into (e.g., disposing of pocket money, Art. 135 Greek CC), or which are assigned to third persons (e.g., the administration of a gift which the child acquired subject to the condition that a third person will administer this gift, Art. 1521 and 1616 para. 2 Greek CC), are exempt from this provision. Parental responsibilities automatically come to an end when the child reaches the age of majority, dies or is declared to be a missing person

Forms and Modalities of Parenting Support in Greece.

Greece, is characterized by low fertility rates, increasing life expectancy, positive immigration balances and an ageing population. At the same time family structures are changing

¹⁴ Art. 1518 para. 2 Greek CC

¹⁵ Arts. 1518 para. 3 and 1606 Greek CC

¹⁶ Art. 518. para 2 Greek CC

¹⁷ Art 1543 Greek CC

progressively, although the nuclear family remains dominant. Despite the increase in single-parent families, the family in general continues to play an extremely important role, serving as an informal safety net.

When it comes to family policies, these include measures that provide financial support for families (allowances, grants, subsidies and services), measures to increase the employment of women; provision of certain incentives in order to support families to achieve a reconciliation between family and working life, to ensure solidarity between generations, and to achieve an increase in fertility. However, the main features of family policies in Greece are their fragmented nature and the emphasis on selected policies which target specific population groups, such as the poor and others vulnerable groups, including unemployed women and/or single mothers. Social protection services for the protection of the family and combating the threat of social exclusion are provided by the central government, the local government, the private sector which aims to profit-making, the non-profit private sector and the informal sector based, family, relatives, friendship and neighborhood.

More analytically, family policy measures in Greece in the form of actions to support parents are divided into:

- Actions for the financial support of families and ensuring access for all to social goods and services. The financial support of the family is ensured through a) tax reliefs (differentiated tax-free income threshold in combination with the number of children, etc.) b) income-related benefits (family allowances) and c) special targeted financial support for large families and low-income households. The criterion to qualify for becoming a large family is that of having “three or more children”. The state support benefits for these large families varies, such as cheaper public transport, discounted state services, including cultural offerings like museums, ancient sites etc., and – a substantial discount on car tax.
- Actions for the employment of women. Strengthening employment through instrumental employment policies is an important contribution to poverty reduction. In this context, (a) programmes for the acquisition of work experience and (b) measures to support single-parent families are designed and implemented.
- Actions to reconcile work and family life. This category includes: parental leave entitlements for the birth and caring for young and sick children; help with childcare cost; expansion of childcare structures (e.g., crèches/day nurseries, pre-school education, all-day schools in pre-school and primary education, creative activity centres for children) policies that facilitate labour market participation of parents and, in particular, mothers;
- Support for expecting parents during pregnancy and support for childbirth – for instance medical care, information and counselling services, or a lump sum paid on the birth of a child.

Recently the Greek government in the context of boosting and enhancing family life adopted the following measures:

- New fathers are protected from dismissal for six months after the birth of the child, giving them protection similar to that which is enjoyed by the mother,
- Parental leave of four months - with a subsidy from the Employment Agency for two months - is introduced for both the father and the mother for each child
- Paternity leave: 14 days of paid paternity leave
- Reduction of VAT on baby products from 24% to 13%
- Introduction of a 2,000-euro one-off payment allowance for each child born in Greece
- Increase of the tax-free threshold by €1,000 for each child

A number of other measures have also been introduced to make it easier for working parents, such as teleworking, flexible working hours or part-time work carer's leave and assisted reproductive leave. Additional care will also be taken for families in mountainous and economically disadvantaged areas.

Strategies and Policies Towards Investing in Children

Child-related policies in Greece have been modernized to a significant extent in the last thirty years due to the impact of the entry of the country's entry into the European Union. The country has adopted the most important international conventions, while it has also incorporated some modern policies (psychiatry, psychiatry, child protection, welfare, quality and evaluation of effectiveness of services provided)

The main and central policy document to ensure that every child is protected is the National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child. This Plan is a policy instrument and strategic tool that aims to ensure the inter-ministerial coordination and the contribution of all relevant agencies to the planning and implementation of relevant actions. It also defines the objectives and timetables for the promotion and protection of the Children's Rights in Greece. It aims to act as a protective shield, attempting to address a number of issues such as child poverty, social exclusion, the absence of child-friendly justice, the lack of care for children with special needs, but also to contribute to the information and education of professionals from various sectors (nursery school teachers, teachers, doctors, etc.) who come into contact with children's victims of abuse or neglect.

As high priority axes of the National Action Plan for the Rights of the child

The following are highlighted:

- **Combating child poverty and its impact on children**

The Measures of this axe are structured under the following Priorities:

-Access to financial resources: child benefit, payment of financial resources due to motherhood; financial support for fostering.

-Access to affordable and quality services:

-Access to compulsory education: access to pre-school services (kindergarten), access to school education services (primary school), access to school education services (primary school), access to school education services (primary school), access to school education services (primary school). access to education (primary and secondary school), special education for children with disabilities, educational integration of Roma children, combating school drop-out (early withdrawal from compulsory education, including the integration of Roma children, special needs education, integration of Roma children into the school system education) through Priority Education Zones and other mechanisms.

Indicative Actions in the framework of this category include:

Minimum income guaranteed; Housing benefit; child benefit; birth grant; preparation of the Annual Report on violence against women.; Programme "Reconciliation of family and professional life; Grant to municipalities in the country for the provision of social services by the structures of the Creative Activity Centres for Children (CACs) under their jurisdiction; : Grant to

the Municipalities and their legal entities for the adaption of the municipal nurseries, kindergartens and crèches to the specifications of the new institutional framework; construction, repair and maintenance of sports facilities of the municipalities; supply and installation of equipment for the upgrading of playgrounds in the municipalities of the; Sports Facilities; Accessibility of people with disabilities to beaches; Combating child begging.

- **Child-friendly justice**

Indicative Actions in the framework of this category include Completion of the operation of the "Children's Homes" institution; Consultation with children in the process of building a new Council of Europe with Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2022-2027); strengthening the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; establishment by the Ministry of Justice of a toll-free mobile telephone number and landline phones to provide information Training of newly recruited officials on the Protocol for the Forensic Examination of Minors victims of sexual offences in criminal proceedings; establishment of a statistical data record; Continuous education and training of the Juvenile Guardians in specialized subjects and good practices; Actions: Treatment of juvenile offenders.

- **Protection of children in the context of refugee and migration flows**

Indicative Actions in the framework of this category include: Improving living conditions and meeting the basic needs of third-country nationals; interactive activities against racism and xenophobia and against radicalization among children, adolescents and young people (indigenous and native). Awareness-raising of the local community and information campaigns on equality between migrant and immigrant children's refugees; programme for the integration of young migrants and refugees in voluntary activities; Grant to organisations for the operation of accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors; National mechanism for the identification and referral of minors in precarious circumstances living conditions; Strengthening the capacity of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors to assess the quality of services provided to unaccompanied minors within the accommodation centres; Strengthening the functioning of the National Mechanism for Reporting and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings; the institution of professional guardianship of unaccompanied minors; Representation of unaccompanied minors; System for recording, keeping and monitoring applications and accommodation data of unaccompanied minors.

- **Ensuring children's right to health**

Indicative actions include: Development of child psychiatric services through the strengthening of Mobile Mental Health Units of legal persons governed by private law; Two (2) short-stay hostels and one (1) Day Centre for minors with psychosocial problems, in Attica; Development of distance psychoeducation and family support programmes; and in-home assistance for caregivers of children and adolescents with mental health problems; Creation of thirteen (13) Mobile Units for the provision of psychosocial services support services for children and adolescents

- **Children's rights to education**

Indicative actions include: Integration of Refugee Children, aged up to 15 years old, in the Educational System; supportive interventions in Roma communities to enhance access and reduce the number of children in the school system.

access to and reduction of drop-out from education by children and adolescents; Interventions to strengthen school structures and the quality of education 2018-2022; Development of support structures for the integration and inclusion in education of pupils with special educational needs "STRENGTHENING PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION"; Inclusion of Vulnerable Social Groups (VSGs) in Schools - Reception Classes; Culture in the New School; Training action against school violence; Improving access to early childhood education and care - Nanny programme of the Neighborhood.

- **Protection of the family and children in the community – deinstitutionalization**

Indicative Actions in the framework of this category include:

Public awareness campaign on the institution of fostering; Implementation of the institution of professional fostering; Provision of alternative services to the children hosted by the Social Centres Welfare Centres of Western Greece and Attica; Combating domestic violence; Training of Greek Police personnel on domestic violence issues. Child Guarantee: transforming institutional care and enhancing alternative and community-based care for children in Greece»

- **Horizontal action on the rights of children with disabilities and international promotion international promotion of the rights of the child**

Indicative Actions in the framework of this category include: Promoting children's rights in international organisations and international multilateral fora; National Action Plan for People with Disabilities.

The Case of Cyprus

Overview of the National Legal Framework Referring to Parental Responsibilities

According to the legal system of Cyprus, parental responsibility includes the determination of the child's name, his/her guardianship, the management of his/her property and his/her representation in any case or legal proceeding concerning him/her or his/her property. In practice it covers all matters concerning the child, as an individual, as well as his/her property. Parental responsibility of the child is the duty and right of the parents, who exercise it jointly. It should be exercised with the best interests of the child in mind (Article 6, Law 216/1990). In cases, where parents are unable to exercise parental care, the court may appoint a guardian (Article 18(2) Law on Parent-Child Relations, Law 216/90).

In the case where the parental responsibility is terminated because of death, or declaration of disappearance, or absence of one of the parents, the parental responsibility should be exercised exclusively by the other parent. Parental responsibility could be removed by court order in cases where both parents request it because of certain and serious reasons. In that case parents

should indicate a person that could exercise the parental responsibility instead of them. Parental responsibility could also be removed by court order, in cases where one of the parents, or the Director of the Social Welfare reports that the other parent was convicted for an offence concerning life, health or morals.

In case of divorce, annulment of marriage or invalid marriage, the exercise of parental responsibility is regulated by the Court, which can assign it to one of the two parents or to both of them jointly or to a third person (Articles 14 and 15, N .216/90). In the event that the Court assigns parental care to one parent only, it may also decide on the other parent's right to contact the child based on the child's best interest (Article 17, Law 216/90). In cases where parents are unable to reach an agreement on the issue of parental responsibility, the agreement should become a court order so that it is legally binding. The Court can regulate any matter concerning the child, including matters of parental care, communication, education and training, health, property management, name, maintenance, moving abroad and abduction. In cases where the Court decides joint custody, parents should decide together and jointly about matters concerning their child. It usually provides that the child will reside equally with both parents.

Forms and modalities of parenting support in Cyprus

For the last decade parental support, has been a growing area of social support in Cyprus. A variety of new forms and modalities focused on parental support have been developed, in order to establish the well-being of families, through the empowerment of both parents and children in many areas, such as social, educational, health and economic.

Regarding the educational support that Cyprus provides to parents, it's important to mention that free education is provided from the ages of 4 - 18 (free education from the age of 4 constitutes a new addition to parental support system) and free education from public universities, with some academic criteria. Moreover, government provides whole day schools, with a low fare for all families. Likewise, educational programs (like «Δ.Ρ.Α.Σ.Ε»), provide educational and psychosocial support to families that have financial difficulties, and more recently a benefit plan that helps low-income families, families with many children and single parent families regarding kindergarten fee. Therefore, it is evident through that the majority of educational support is targeting financial support rather the provision of services.

As mentioned above, economic support is one of the most significant areas of family policy that Cyprus provides. Cyprus follows a benefit policy towards parents, for example the «Single parent family allowance», «Child benefit», «Tuition Subsidy and Feeding Scheme for Children up to 4 years of age», «Honorary Allowance for a Mother of Many Children», «Student Allowances» and many more.

In addition, regarding the provision of care, parental leave was introduced in Cyprus in 2002, as a result of harmonization with the European acquis. Thus, Cyprus provides mothers and fathers with the opportunity to take parental leave after the birth of their child. Usually paternity leave (which is a recent addition to the parents' rights) takes up to 14 days and the maternal leave takes up to 4 months for the first child. In 2022, a new law was adopted to balance professional and family life of the parents with the addition of parental leave allowance and right to care leave.

Finally, regarding healthcare Cyprus supports the physical and mental wellbeing through the provision of low fare healthcare system (GESY) which gives parents the opportunity to take care

of their children's health, with a small fee. GESY includes healthcare services in all areas such as, psychologists, child psychiatrists, paediatricians etc. Also, regarding maternity services, public hospitals provide new mothers with the opportunity of low fee parturition, and midwives support before and after the child birth. In terms of psychological support to families, local municipalities all over Cyprus such as Nicosia Municipality and Aradippou Municipality, provides counselling services to parents for free, or sometimes with low fee. Additionally, an important program which provides seminars for parents, aiming to support the parental role, is operating from the Cyprus pedagogical institute.

National Strategies and Policies towards Investing in Children

There are several national strategies and policies concerning the well-being of children and families. These strategies can be both directly oriented to children, and indirectly oriented to them, through the support of parents and children care specialists.

- **Education (Prevention and Intervention)**

Education in Cyprus is free and compulsory up to the age of 15 for all children. Inclusive and equitable education for all children is a strategy based on Children's right to education and aims at child development. The Ministry of Education is implementing more strategies regarding the well-being of children, through schools.

For example, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence in Schools was implemented in 2018 until 2022, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. This strategy aims to create a safe place for children at schools, emphasizing the creation of a democratic and inclusive environment for all children. The "School Violence Intervention Team" supports schools in Secondary Education to deal with serious incidents and phenomena of extreme delinquency. The main role of this team is to support schools in the development and implementation of action plans based on a holistic and systemic approach.

The National Strategy for better Internet for Children (2018-2023) promotes sensible and responsible use of the internet for young people. The purpose of the strategy is to provide children with the knowledge and conditions to use the Internet creatively, safely and responsibly. Thus, the strategy is focused at providing new opportunities in learning skills and teach safe ways of using the internet.

Another action implemented by the Ministry of Education is the Programme of non-school-related actions to support pupils which belongs to vulnerable groups, operating since 2012.

Health Education has been introduced since 2011 in the syllabuses of Upper Secondary General Education Schools as a cross-curricular programme. The purpose of the Health Education Curriculum is to promote the mental, physical and social well-being of students through the development of personal and social skills and also through collective action that will develop their social and physical environment. There are four main topics addressed through Health Education, such as the development and empowerment of self, healthy lifestyle, the improvement of the social self and the formation of an active citizen. Sex education Programme is also part of the health education and it deals with the sexuality of the individual and aims to develop interpersonal relations, respect, and mutual understanding between the two sexes.

- **Health (Prevention and Intervention)**

The Ministry of Health in Cyprus, has also implemented several strategies which are focused in the development of children, parents and families.

The Strategy regarding the Rights of the Child to health (2017-2025) is targeting young people up to the age of 18 years old. This National Strategy aims to guide, promote and protect the health rights of children in Cyprus, providing a clear framework for action in order to improve the current structures and, through interdisciplinary collaboration methods, provide holistic health care to the child, with their own active involvement.

The National Strategy on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Youth (2018-2025) targets young people from 15-29 years old. The Key Action Pillars of the Strategy are Parental Health, Family Planning - Infertility - Birth Control, Adverse Pregnancy – Abortion, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs) - HIV / AIDS - Reproductive System Infections, Prevention of Cancer of the Reproductive System and Preventing and Managing Cases of Sexual Violence.

The National Strategy Addressing Addictions 2021-2028 aims to raise awareness regarding prevention, treatment and social support services, addressing especially children and young people but also every citizens in Cyprus, focused in the creation of a protective environment, free from all kinds of addictions. The plan is based on Prevention, Treatment, Social Support, Reduction of harm, Reduction of supply, Research – Evaluation – Education and International Cooperation.

Moreover, Cyprus was the first country on a European level to develop and adopt a Strategic Action Plan to Prevent Accidents and Poisoning in Children (2016-2020). The Action Plan's objective is to substantially reduce morbidity and mortality from unintentional injuries by setting realistic goals. For each type of accident, basic principles of prevention, including education of the public and legislation, have been adopted.

- **Protection of Children's Rights**

The Commissioner for Children's Rights is an independent institution which deals exclusively with the rights of the child. The Commissioner is appointed by the Council of Ministers pursuant to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Laws 2007 and 2014 [(Laws 74(I)/2007), 44(I)/2014]], which came into force on 22/6/2007.

The Commissioner's mission is to protect and promote children's rights. To achieve this, the law grants the Commissioner permission to take any action they deem necessary for the benefit of the children. The Commissioner has the right to represent children and their interests at all levels, raises public awareness and sensitization around their rights and identify and promote the views of the children where themselves cannot be heard, supervises and monitors the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights, as well as monitors and follows up the legislation and administrative practices in relation to children. Additionally, the Commissioner promotes the ratification of international treaties related to children rights by the Republic, submits, on behalf of any child, applications for the appointment of a special representative in judicial proceedings affecting the child; where the Commissioner may be appointed by the court as the representative of a child.

Part C : Best Practice Initiatives

France

1. Best Practice Title: Parental Education Program for Positive Discipline

<https://montessoricettes.fr/discipline-positive-education-bienveillante/>

Best Practice category: National training program to improve parental skills and course of action with both children and adolescents

Best Practice description: The context of this best practice is the need to support parents in implementing positive discipline strategies and promoting healthy parent-child relationships. The objective is to provide parents with effective tools and techniques to foster positive behavior and emotional well-being in their children. The program has been implemented in France for the past decade and continues to be ongoing. It is offered through community centers, schools, and healthcare institutions, targeting parents of children and adolescents. The methodology of the program incorporates a combination of workshops, group sessions, and individual consultations. It provides parents with evidence-based knowledge on child development, age-appropriate expectations, and positive discipline strategies. The program emphasizes open communication, active listening, and non-violent discipline approaches. Through interactive activities, role-playing, and discussions, parents learn practical skills to manage challenging behaviors, set appropriate boundaries, and promote positive reinforcement. The program also focus on strengthening the parent-child bond and promoting healthy emotional expression.

Evidence of Success: The success of the program is evident through quantitative and qualitative data. Pre- and post-program evaluations have shown significant improvements in parental confidence, knowledge of positive discipline strategies, and more positive parent-child interactions. Feedback from participating parents has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting improved communication, reduced conflict, and enhanced parent-child relationships. External evaluations have also recognized the program as an effective approach to promoting positive discipline and improving family dynamics. The program's impact extends beyond the participating families, as the knowledge and skills acquired by parents can positively influence their wider social networks and communities.

Constraints: Awareness and Outreach: One challenge is ensuring widespread awareness of the program and reaching all parents, including those from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Sustainability: Maintaining long-term engagement and follow-up support for parents after the program concludes can be challenging, as ongoing reinforcement and practice of positive discipline strategies are crucial.

Parental Resistance: Some parents may initially resist or be hesitant to adopt new discipline approaches, especially if they are accustomed to more traditional or punitive methods. Overcoming this resistance requires effective communication and ongoing support.

Slovenia

1. Best Practice Title: The Strengthening Families Program« – SFP (prevention program)

<https://strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/>

Best Practice description: The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general-population families that is recognized both nationally and internationally. The program includes lectures, presentations, discussions, role-playing, audio-visual materials, homework, games, children's play, parent's play, supervised exercises, etc. Implementing the Strengthening Families Program involves the following activities:

- Hiring and training at least four effective group leaders, two to run the children's groups and two for the parent's groups, and a program or site coordinator.
- Recruiting families by stressing improvements in family relationships, parenting skills, and youth's behaviours and grades
- Using creative recruitment and retention strategies matched to the needs of participating families, such as special incentives, family meals, transportation, and child care.
- Implementing the full Strengthening Families Program once per week for 14 weeks or in alternative formats, such as twice per week or at retreat weekends.
- Eating meals together as a family, attending separate parent training classes and children's skills training classes and then in the second hour participating in structured family activities including practice sessions in therapeutic child play, family meetings, communication skills, effective discipline, reinforcing positive behaviour and planning fun family activities together.
- Conducting a needs assessment and evaluating the program using standardized family, parent, and child outcome measures and using the outcome and process measures for continuous quality improvement.

*However, it is advised in the training, that each group of families is different and that the group leaders must adapt to their current needs and interests.

Most meetings follow the same schedule:

- Beginning with a meal (all together),
- Doing separate activities with parents and children (following the written programme),
- Joint conclusion of the meeting.

The original SFP was developed to improve behavioural problems in 6 to 12-year-old children of alcohol or drug abusers. It has been culturally adapted and tested with urban and rural families with elementary school-aged children. SFP has proven successful with high-risk children whose parents are not drug or alcohol abusers and with families of diverse backgrounds. Separate training manuals have been developed for African American families, which contain the same basic content as the original SFP but have culturally appropriate pictures and language with

some specific information regarding African American families and communities. SFP has also been modified for Asian/Pacific Islanders in Utah and Hawaii, rural families, early teens in the Midwest, and Hispanic families. Currently offered to court-ordered parents, homeless families, and parents with children in protective services. Participation in the program is voluntary. In Slovenia, the program is intended for families with younger and elementary school children who have found themselves in difficulties and do not know how to move on and for families who would like to strengthen their relationships even more and empower themselves to continue living with their growing children more easily.

The program, has 2 specific target groups:

- parents,
- children, aged 6 to 12.

While implementing the programme, the adult training center LU Lendava have added 2 more target groups with the intent not to exclude any family members while also providing them with quality activities:

- children, younger than 6 years,
- adolescents, between 12 and 18 years.

The activities from the manual for the children are adapted to their age group and their needs. The goal of the program is to listen to the children, play with them, and know how to set healthy limits and rules in the family.

The Strengthening Families Program is designed to achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Decreased use and intention to use tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.
- Decreased children's behaviour problems.
- Increased children's social and life skills.
- Increased family cohesion, communication and organization.
- Increased family cohesion, communication and organization.
- Lowering of risk factors and increases in resilience, assets, and protective factors

The main topics of the activities are positive family relations,

- family rules,
- mutual respect,
- active listening,
- expressing emotions and thoughts,
- communication, spending quality time together.

Evidence of Success: From the experience of LU Lendava, the programme can be seen as very useful and beneficial. The whole organization of the programme activities (starting with a meal, being in a non-formal environment etc.), gives the group leaders and the participants a chance to connect in a safe, different environment, that they are mostly used to (for example, the social work centres, school or other offices, clinics etc.). This way, the workflow is a lot more relaxed and allows everyone to open up about personal topics. It is also a great way for people, who are labelled as problematic or dysfunctional by the general society to see, that there are a lot of families who face similar or completely different challenges and yet find ways to overcome them. This helps them feel more confident and empowers them. However, on a national level, LU Lendava would definitely recommend the group leaders form a national group of implementors of the SFP, where they could exchange experiences, recommendations and

advice. They would also be able to keep track of all the implementors of the program on a national level and therefore be able to compare the results.

Spain

1. Best Practice Title: Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

<https://www.triplep.net/glo-es/home/>

Best Practice category: National training program to improve parental skills and course of action with both children and adolescents.

Best Practice Description : Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is an evidence-based parenting program that originated in Australia and has been widely implemented in Spain. The program aims to promote positive parenting strategies, prevent and address behavior problems in children, and enhance parent-child relationships. Triple P provides parents with a range of tools and strategies to develop positive parenting skills and create a nurturing and supportive family environment. Here are some key details about Triple P in Spain:

Program Levels: Triple P offers different levels of intervention to meet the varying needs of parents and families. These levels include:

- a. **Primary Care Level:** This level provides universal parenting information and resources to all parents, promoting positive parenting strategies and preventive approaches. It may include public awareness campaigns, workshops, and self-help materials accessible to the general population.
- b. **Selected Care Level:** This level targets parents who may require additional support or have specific concerns. It includes group-based parenting programs that provide more intensive education and guidance on specific parenting challenges.
- c. **Targeted Care Level:** This level is designed for families with children who have more significant behavior difficulties. It involves more individualized interventions, such as one-on-one sessions with trained professionals, to address specific behavior problems and support parents in managing challenging behaviors effectively.

Program Content: Triple P offers a comprehensive set of evidence-based strategies and techniques for parents. The program covers various parenting domains, including:

- a. **Positive Parenting Skills:** Triple P equips parents with positive parenting skills that promote children's social, emotional, and behavioral development. It focuses on building warm and nurturing relationships, effective communication, setting appropriate expectations, and reinforcing positive behavior.
- b. **Behavior Management:** Triple P provides parents with strategies for managing challenging behavior in children. It emphasizes techniques such as setting clear rules and boundaries, using consistent discipline, using positive reinforcement, and implementing effective consequences.
- c. **Emotional Regulation:** The program supports parents in fostering emotional regulation skills in children. It offers guidance on helping children understand and express their emotions, teaching self-control techniques, and promoting healthy emotional development.
- d. **Problem-Solving and Coping Skills:** Triple P teaches parents problem-solving skills and techniques for managing stress and difficult situations. It empowers parents to handle challenging parenting scenarios effectively and build their own resilience.

Delivery Formats: Triple P is delivered through various formats to accommodate different preferences and circumstances. These formats include:

- a. Group Programs: Group-based Triple P programs bring together parents with similar concerns or challenges. These programs involve interactive sessions led by trained facilitators, providing education, skill-building activities, and group discussions.
- b. Individual Sessions: Triple P offers individual sessions where parents can receive personalized support and guidance from trained practitioners. These sessions allow for more tailored intervention and addressing specific family needs.
- c. Online Programs: Triple P has online platforms and resources that provide parents with convenient access to parenting information, tips, and self-help materials. Online programs may include video modules, interactive exercises, and downloadable resources.

Program Implementation: Triple P in Spain is implemented through collaborations between government agencies, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and community organizations. Trained professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, and educators, are involved in delivering the program at various levels.

Evidence of Success: Triple P has been widely recognized and implemented in Spain as an effective approach to supporting parents and promoting positive parenting practices. The program's evidence-based nature and the availability of multiple intervention levels contribute to its adaptability to diverse parenting needs and contexts

Constraints. While Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) has been widely implemented in Spain, there are some challenges and barriers encountered in applying this good practice. These challenges can vary depending on the specific context and implementation strategies, such as :
Awareness and Accessibility: One challenge is ensuring that parents are aware of the Triple P program and can easily access its services. Many parents may not be familiar with the program or its benefits, leading to low participation rates. Raising awareness about the program and making it accessible to diverse populations, including disadvantaged or marginalized communities, can be a significant challenge.

- **Cultural and Linguistic Considerations:** Spain has a diverse population with various cultural backgrounds and languages. Ensuring that the Triple P program is culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate for different communities is important for effective implementation. Adapting program materials and delivery methods to suit diverse cultural contexts and addressing language barriers can be a challenge.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Implementing Triple P requires trained professionals who can effectively deliver the program to parents. Providing comprehensive training to practitioners and building their capacity to deliver the program with fidelity and cultural competence can be a logistical challenge. Ensuring a sufficient number of trained practitioners across different regions and settings is also crucial for program sustainability.
- **Funding and Resources:** Securing adequate funding and resources to support the implementation and sustainability of Triple P can be a challenge. Funding constraints may limit the scale and reach of the program, impacting its ability to serve a broader population. It is essential to allocate sufficient resources to training, program materials, staff support, and ongoing evaluation and quality assurance measures.
- **Stigma and Parental Engagement:** Engaging parents in parenting programs can be challenging due to various factors, including the stigma associated with seeking help or participating in such programs. Overcoming barriers related to stigma, promoting a

positive perception of seeking parenting support, and encouraging parental engagement in Triple P can be a significant hurdle.

- **Integration and Collaboration:** Achieving effective integration and collaboration among different sectors and stakeholders involved in Triple P implementation can be challenging. This includes collaboration between healthcare providers, educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies. Ensuring smooth coordination and communication among these stakeholders is crucial for successful program implementation.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Sustaining the implementation of Triple P beyond initial pilot projects or funding cycles can be challenging. Ensuring long-term commitment and support from policymakers, securing ongoing funding, and integrating Triple P into existing policies and services are essential for program sustainability.

2. Best Practice Title: The Incredible Years

Best Practice category: National initiatives and tool Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: The Incredible Years is an evidence-based parenting program that has been implemented in Spain to support parents and promote positive parent-child relationships. The program focuses on enhancing parenting skills, reducing behavior problems in children, and fostering social-emotional development. Here are some details about The Incredible Years program in Spain:

Program Content: The Incredible Years program in Spain covers various aspects of parenting and child development, including:

- a. **Positive Parenting Skills:** The program provides parents with strategies and techniques to build positive relationships with their children. It emphasizes nurturing, responsive, and consistent parenting practices that promote children's well-being.
- b. **Behavior Management:** The program equips parents with effective behavior management techniques to address challenging behaviors in children. It teaches skills such as setting limits, using positive reinforcement, and implementing consistent consequences.
- c. **Emotional Regulation:** The program focuses on promoting children's emotional regulation skills. It helps parents understand and support their children's emotional needs, teaching techniques for teaching emotional literacy, self-control, and problem-solving.
- d. **Social Skills and Problem-Solving:** The program aims to enhance children's social skills and problem-solving abilities. It provides parents with strategies to encourage positive social interactions, empathy, communication, and conflict resolution in their children.

Delivery Formats: The Incredible Years program in Spain is delivered through various formats to cater to different parent preferences and needs. These formats include:

- a. **Group Programs:** The program offers group-based sessions where parents come together to learn and share experiences. Group programs provide a supportive environment for parents to receive information, practice skills, and exchange ideas.
- b. **Parent Support Groups:** Parent support groups focus on providing emotional support and a sense of community for parents. These groups create opportunities for parents to connect, share challenges, and receive encouragement from one another.
- c. **Home Visits:** In some cases, The Incredible Years program may involve home visits by trained practitioners. Home visits allow for personalized

Greece

1. Best Practice Title: The Smile of the Child

<https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/poioi-eimaste/>

Best Practice category: National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description Today the Organization "The Smile of the Child", recognized internationally, with a Vision: the Smile of every child, implements nationwide, 365 days a year and 24 hours a day, effective and direct actions for preventing and addressing particular phenomena that threaten children.

In the course of 23 years of action "The Smile of the Child" has supported more than 1.480.000 children and their families.

One of the numerous actions of work is the creation of Support Centers for Children and Families.

«The Smile of the Child» operates a total of 11 Support Centers in the following areas:

- Material support (food, necessities, school supplies, Christmas packages, Easter packages, clothing, footwear, household appliances, baby products, furniture, etc.)
- Things important for every child (books, games, etc.)
- Psychological support
- Medical support (medical coverage, medical examinations, surgeries etc.)
- Coverage of other needs for children (treatment, lessons, etc.)

and whatever the family in crisis needs in order to stand on its feet with dignity. Families visit the nearest Center for Child and Family Support in their living area and the provision of items is made by appointment in order to absolutely preserve its dignity. The Support Centers offer places for children to play when they accompany their parents.

Insurance of the provided goods

The goods are provided by the Organization by both constant and seasonal mobilization of: Businesses; Individuals; Schools Associations etc. Based upon specific needs, lists are published with everything necessary: Food; Clothing & footwear; School supplies; Games; Medications Toiletries; Specialized equipment (e.g., for infants) etc. Reception, Storage and Management of products:

All products are received at the Support Centers for Children and Families of the Organization all across Greece or by the specialized vehicles (refrigerated trucks, etc.) and staff of the Organization in prearranged delivery areas. The Organization always provides a detailed delivery note and a thank you letter to the individual, company or organization. The goods are stocked and managed in the Organization's Support Centers. All storage areas comply fully with the health and safety standards for the collection, storage and distribution of goods.

«The Smile of the Child» disposes vehicles that meet all the health and safety specifications for the transport of goods (such as refrigerated trucks, specialized refrigerators for the transportation of medicine etc.).

These vehicles ensure the sufficiency of goods in the Support Centers and the constant flow of products to those families in need with unique criterion the good use of any offer without any wastage.

The "Smile of the Child" is supporting the public institutions on a longstanding basis. At the same time, "The Smile of the Child" promotes synergies with institutional, voluntary and private actors based on the conviction that only by uniting efforts can bring substantial and tangible results.

2. Best Practice Title: SOS 1056 for Children, Adolescents and Parents

<https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/ta-nea-mas/to-2022-me-tin-ekseidikeimeni-omada-464-epaggelmaton-epistimonon-ergazomenon-stiriksame-se-oli-tin-ellada-72501-paidia-kai-tis-oikogeneies-tous/>

Best Practice category: National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: Through the SOS Line 1056, children, teenagers and parents can find people to listen and act immediately to provide the support they need in each individual case. The line operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year free of charge from landline, mobile and payphone and is supported by staff of the non-governmental organization "Smile of the Child". In detail, the calls concerned the following issues, all of which were handled by "The Smile of the Child":

- On-site intervention and response to children in crisis.
- Intervention and treatment of children at risk.
- Recording of anonymous and anonymous complaints of child abuse/neglect/ economic exploitation/trafficking.
- Intervention in cases of child victims of cybercrime.
- Provide support services and activate programmes to search for missing children - child victims of abduction.
- Providing accompanying services to unaccompanied child victims of economic migration.
- Provision of accompanying services to child victims of trafficking.
- Requests and organization of preventive pediatric and dental procedures in schools in Greece.
- Requests to organize information visits to schools and parents' associations on child abuse issues.
- Remediation of problems concerning child victims of economic exploitation.
- Provision of support services, hospitalization coverage, medical coverage for children with health problems.
- Identification and mobilization of volunteer blood donors, platelet donors, bone marrow donors.
- Transport of children with health problems in association vehicles.
- Hosting of child victims of abuse/neglect.

Evidence of success: The National SOS 1056 Children's Hotline for Children, from the beginning of 2007 to date has received 348,042 calls, from children, adolescents and adults. In 2022 the Hotline center received 197.548 calls / 1 call every 2 minutes / average waiting time of 12 seconds

3. Best Practice Title: Action "Neighborhood nannies"

<https://ypergasias.gov.gr/isotita-ton-fylon/programma-ntantades-tis-geitonias/>

Best Practice category: National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: The "Neighborhood Nannies" is a new project that falls under the axis of actions in favor of reconciling family and professional life, which is one of the key objectives of the European Strategy for Equality for the coming years. The project is now in its preliminary phase, runs under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and will initially be implemented on a pilot basis in 61 municipalities in the country and will then be gradually implemented throughout the country. This project mainly concerns the care of infants aged between two months and 2.5 years and provides for financial support for working parents - mainly single parents, foster parents and in general for the care of their child or children, either within the family home or in the home of a childcare worker. It is stressed that the objective of the programme is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to support and facilitate women mothers and carers, so that after having a child they can fully reintegrate into the labour market and continue their professional careers, and on the other hand, to reduce undeclared work by encouraging unemployed, mainly women, to work as childcare workers.

Evidence of success: For the time being, the platform has been activated, where interested "nannies" can register. Specifically, in the spring the platform <https://ntantades.gov.gr/> was opened for applications to the register of guardians in 33 municipalities and recently it was announced that it will be extended to 28 more.

The programme is being extended, although it has not even been piloted yet, at the request of the municipalities, who, aware of their inadequate structures, want to offer more solutions to young couples.

Cyprus

1. Best Practice Title : Hope For Children - About Us (uncrcpc.org.cy)

Best Practice category: National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: The "Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center is an International Humanitarian Independent Institution based in Cyprus. The institution is established on the standards and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and European Union Law. It works on humanitarian and development policy emphasized in the defense and promotion of children's rights, through research, grassroots programs and implementation and advisory services offered to both, governments and international organizations.

"Hope For Children" works together with national, regional and an international advocacy institution in an effort to reform child welfare systems on behalf of children who depend on initiatives like this one for protection and care. The aim is to bring together judges, lawyers, psychologists, medical practitioners, mediators, counsellors, mental health workers, media representatives, child cares, teachers & allied professionals to contribute their specialized

expertise in a practical manner through education, legal and other advocacy to promote and protect the interests of children and youth.

The operation of the organization is founded on the principle of promoting and protecting the rights of children which is done through the implementation of a variety of projects on National, European and Global level.

There are numerous actions and programs offered nationally from “Hope for Children” :

- Children’s House
- Counseling Center for Children
- Foster Care Program
- Beat Bullying Program
- European Programmes
- Homes for Hope
- Service for Missing Children
- Non-formal Education
- One in five campaigns
- European Hotline for Missing Children 116000
- Semi-independent Living Programme
- CRC Campus Club

Counselling center for children provides services free of charge to children who are experiencing difficult life events, family difficulties or adjustment difficulties (e.g., parents’ divorce, leaving from home, school bullying, and death of a loved one, behavioural problems). Accordingly, services are also provided to parents in order for the support of children to be done through a systemic approach, while at the same time strengthening the parenting skills of parents.

Foster Care Families is implemented in collaboration with the Social Welfare Services and aims to ensure the protection, care and best interest of the child who is deprived of a family environment.

Children’s House is a child friendly, safe environment for sexually abused children, which brings together all relevant services under one roof, using a multidisciplinary and interagency approach. The coordination and operation of the Children’s House was assigned to “Hope for Children” CRC Policy Center by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, and the Social Welfare Services.

Homes for Hope are private children’s shelters for the accommodation and support of unaccompanied children in cooperation with the Social Welfare Services. The aim of the shelter is to provide unaccompanied children with more than just accommodation, through the provision of multi-disciplinary and holistic services, which would cover all aspects of their daily lives, with a special focus on psycho-social support and legal guidance to unaccompanied children.

Evidence of success According to the statistics of the organization in 2022, “Hope for Children” supported at a national level 231 approved foster families (couples or single persons), while 101 cases are currently under evaluation. Regarding all national districts, approximately 162 children are accommodated in foster families supported by the Organization. It is important to mention that the number of families increased to approximately 50% in 2022.

With reference to the actions aiming at educating children, of all age groups, about their rights and obligations, and most specifically through experiential non formal education activities, during 2022 almost 5,000 children have been trained in public and private schools in various topics including children’s rights, school bullying, diversity, anger management, hate speech, racism, prevention of sexual abuse etc.

More than 170 children were accommodated (84 in Nicosia Shelter, 46 in Larnaca Shelter, 45 in semi-independent living program) during 2022 in the Homes for Hope shelters and in the Semi-

independent living structures for unaccompanied children under the guardianship of the Director of Social Welfare Services operated by Hope For Children.

In 2022, the organization offered its services to 439 children that were referred to the “Children’s House” for investigation of sexual abuse.

2. Best Practice Title: 1466 HELPLINE for Children and families

[Hope For Children - 1466 – Helpline by «Hope For Children» CRC Policy Center for the children of Cyprus \(uncrcpc.org.cy\)](https://www.uncrcpc.org.cy)

Best Practice category: National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: The Helpline 1466, offered by the “Hope for Children” and aims to provide psychological, social and legal support, counselling and guidance for matters related to child protection, offered to children and parents.

The Helpline operates 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, without any charge. The calls received in the helpline will be handled by the specialized staff of the Organization, which includes psychologists, social workers and lawyers. Each call will be assigned to a professional according to the needs of the persons calling. Hope For Children, currently employs 95 full-time staff with various backgrounds, specialized on child protection matters.

The helpline provides support to children facing any type of abuse and neglect such as bullying, physical or sexual abuse, cyberbullying, grooming etc., and to parents seeking guidance on issues related to their children.

According to the evaluation of each situation the professional will suggest ways to handle it, either with the referral to the organization services or other national and non-national services.

Evidence of success: The National Helpline 1466, during 2022 alone responded to more than 700 phone calls in order to provide support and guidance services.

3. Best Practice Title: APHVF – Education and Child care support Program in APHVF’s shelters

Best Practice category : National initiative Supporting Parenting and Assisting with Childcare

Best Practice Description: Since 2020, the Education and Child care support Program has been operating in the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family shelters. The purpose of the program is to meet the social needs and improve the quality of life for women victims of domestic violence and their children during the time they stay in the Shelter. Through the services offered by the program, the objective is the identification of children's needs through observation and discussion, the provision of psychological support, and empowerment, the provision of assistance in order to strengthen their parental role and give guidance to mothers regarding livelihood issues related to the child.

The program focuses also in the monitoring and handling of possible health problems of children. Through various activities they also emphasize in strengthening the physical, mental, emotional and social development of children and the provision of care to infants, toddlers and children regarding personal hygiene and nutrition. Trained professionals offer also psycho-educational activities and experiential workshops and support children with reading. The program also provides care for children with special needs. While the shelters work on 24/7

basis, professionals are also responsible for a 24-hour supervision of the children in cases where the mothers need to move from the Shelter either for work or health and other reasons. Finally, among the services offered is the preparation of legal reports.

The objectives of the program are centered on the empowerment of women, and their parental role and the development of children's social and emotional skills. Through the services provided women are supported in order to grow their productivity, enable them enter or re-enter the labor market and thus minimize their dependence on social benefits policy and generally help in their social reintegration. Another important objective highlighted is to reduce the risk of returning to an abusive environment.

Evidence of success: According to APHVF's data only in 2022, the program offered its services to 444 children. A big percentage of women that stayed at the Association's shelters were mothers with children (64%) and a very satisfying percentage (37%) of them managed to re-enter or enter the labor market.

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