

# An international perspective on effective models of prevention

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**Organisations**



**33**  
**Countries**



## About us

A Growing Community of Public Authorities at local, regional and national level and Organisations responsible for social services representing more than one million professionals across Europe and beyond.

## Our Mission

We Inspire Social Services  
Leaders to Improve the Lives of  
People in the Community

# Members in Germany



**Arbeitstagung der  
Sozialamtsleiterinnen und  
Sozialamtsleiter der großen  
Großstädte**



# Effective models of prevention – ESN input

- 1. ESNs work on family and child support**
- 2. What do we mean by prevention?**
- 3. What are the key elements?**
- 4. Prevention and family support in the child guarantee**
- 5. What are good examples of prevention?**
- 6. Conclusions & Recommendations**

# What to prevent?

Preventing negative outcomes for children and families

- ...**Overwhelming of parents**
- ...**Harm to children (physical/ psychological)**
  - Harm to children getting unnoticed
  - Loss of information about children at risk
- ...**Child–family separation & Institutionalisation of children**
- ...**Child poverty** & children's **unequal chances** for societal participation & education
- ... Early school leaving
- ...**Escalation** of problems
- ...**Higher costs** for the welfare state



# Key elements of prevention

- ✓ **Early detection** of needs i.e. where public services have contact with families and children
- ✓ Local support **networks** & service infrastructure: **Parents support, parenting advice, daycare**
- ✓ Easily **accessible information** for parents / **Active outreach**
- ✓ Support in **navigating** the system and **advice for take-up**
- ✓ **Working with parents in trustful cooperation, best-interest of the child prevails**
- ✓ **Integrated** working across services
  - ✓ **Exchange of information**
  - ✓ **Multi-agency work**
  - ✓ **Partnerships & agreements** of (public) services in contact with children and families



# Prevention in the child guarantee

“The **objective** of this Recommendation is to **prevent** and combat **social exclusion** by guaranteeing the access of children in need to a set of key services.”

“**prevent** and fight violence against children” / “**prevent** and reduce early school leaving” / “housing policies...**preventing** the risk of homelessness”



*“**Early intervention and prevention** are essential, together with better access to public **health prevention** and promotion programmes, including vaccination, and **parenting support**, which can help achieve better outcomes.” (incl. mental health)*

“Strengthening **cooperation and coordination** between services at various levels **warrants effective prevention** and supports social inclusion of children. ... MS to... **combine preventive** and remedial measures ”

## Target group in the child guarantee

Member States are recommended to identify **children in need** and within this group take into account specific disadvantages experienced, in particular, by:

- (a) homeless children or children experiencing severe **housing deprivation**;
- (b) children with **disabilities**;
- (c) children with **mental health** issues;
- (d) children with a **migrant background** or minority ethnic origin, particularly Roma;
- (e) children in **alternative**, especially **institutional, care**;
- (f) children in **precarious family situations**.

‘children in **precarious family situations**’ means children exposed to various risk factors that could lead to poverty or to social exclusion. This includes:

- living in a **single-earner household**;
- living with a parent with disabilities;
- living in a household where there are **mental health problems** or **long-term illness**;
- living in a household where there is **substance abuse**, or **domestic violence**;
- children of a **Union citizen** who has moved to **another Member State** while the children themselves remained in their Member State of origin;
- children having a teenage mother or being a teenage mother; and
- children having an imprisoned parent;

...Some prevention examples from the **local level**:



**What are good examples of ESN members promoting the goals of the EU Child Guarantee with regard to prevention?**

## “SIMBA”: DAY CARE AND REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, Bucharest, Romania

### Activities

- Psychological recovery
- Applied behaviour therapy (ABA)
- Speech therapy
- Psychosocial counselling
- Psychological counselling
- Individual counselling
- Group counselling
- Family counselling
- Parent support group

Child

Parent(s)

**Multi-professional team:** educators, psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, physiotherapists, masseurs and a process coordinator.

Part of Romania's DI-Strategy for children

**Free of charge**



## “SIMBA”: DAY CARE AND REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, Bucharest, Romania

### Outcomes

- Parents feel **better supported**
- The **relationship** between parents and children improves
- Parents are **more involved** in children's activities.
- Children's access to educational **or specialised services** improved

The project was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (FEDR) within the Regional Operational Program (POR) 2014-2020.

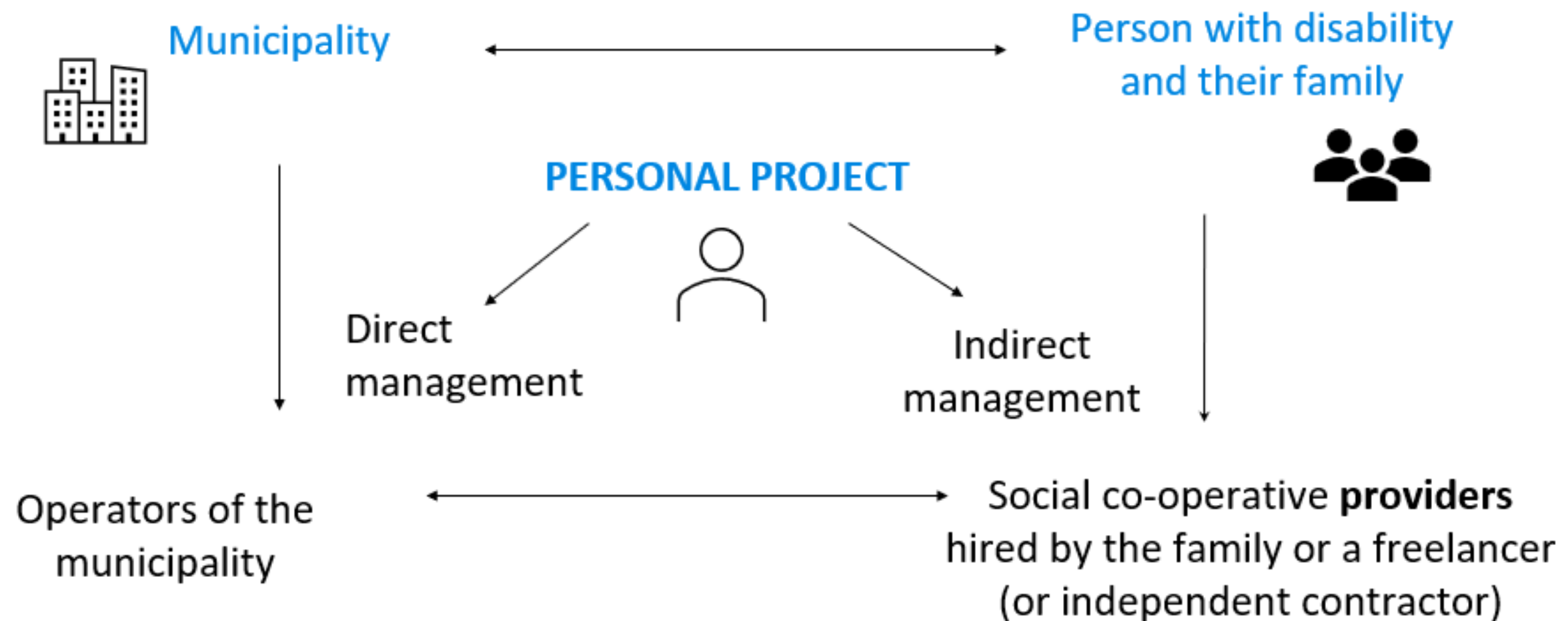


# Family support preventing institutionalisation

## PERSONALISED INCLUSION PLANS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, ABC, Sardinia, Italy

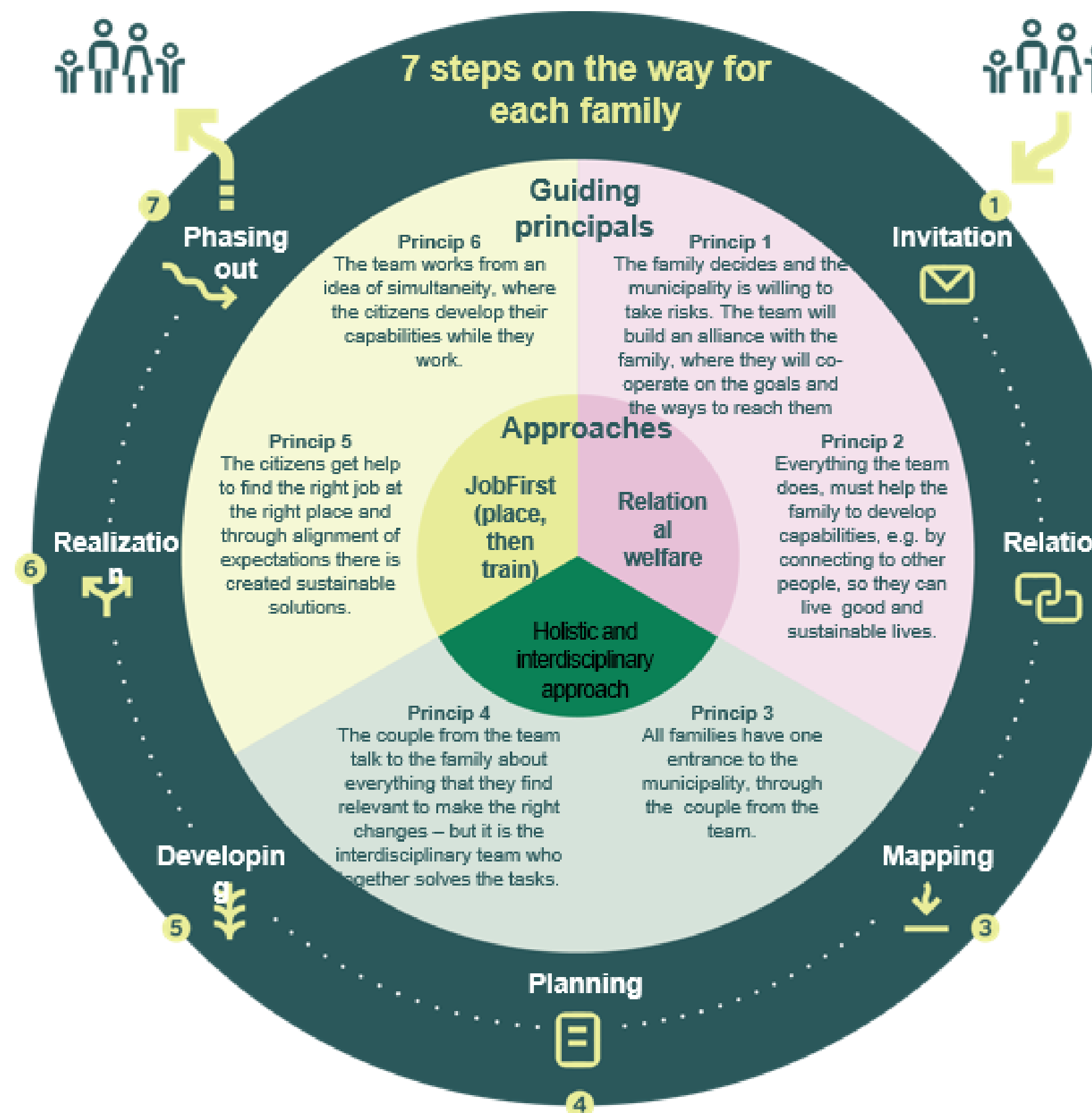
The municipalities' social services departments **make a needs assessment** with **children and their families** to identify together the **child's goals** and the **necessary care and support** in order to achieve those goals: e.g. education, sport, social, personal or home support; day centres or other types of facilities.

The family can decide whether support is **directly managed** by the municipality and its social provider, or if they wish instead to have an **allowance to contract separate** providers.



## STAIRCASE TO STAIRCASE, Gellerup, Aarhus, Denmark

- **Goal:** Addresses unemployment, limited education, health issues, and barriers to support services for vulnerable families
- **How:** Improve family well-being, enhance parents' employability, and promote long-term self-sufficiency.
- **Activities:** building & training interdisciplinary teams, family outreach, and trust-building through home visits. Family counselling across 7 steps.
- **Team:** 1. Health care worker, 1 cultural worker, 2 pedagogues, 2 social workers for families, 4 social workers for employment



## Outcomes

- Improved parents' participation in the labour market
- **52% of the parents are now participating in education or employed in a full-time job, while 66% working part time**
- **Children's absence from school has decreased by 25%**
- **The employment for adolescents in part-time jobs (beside school) has increased by 66%.**
- **The municipality saves an average of over 100.000 Dkr (14.000 Euro) per family per year - Over a four-year period.**
- **The project "Staircase to Staircase" is estimated to have resulted in a total saving in the social and employment area of at least 15 million Dkr (2 million Euro) for the 62 families.**



## PROTECTION AND EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN LEFT AT HOME, Romania – Safe the Children with national & local authorities

**Goal:** Reduce negative impact of parent migration on children

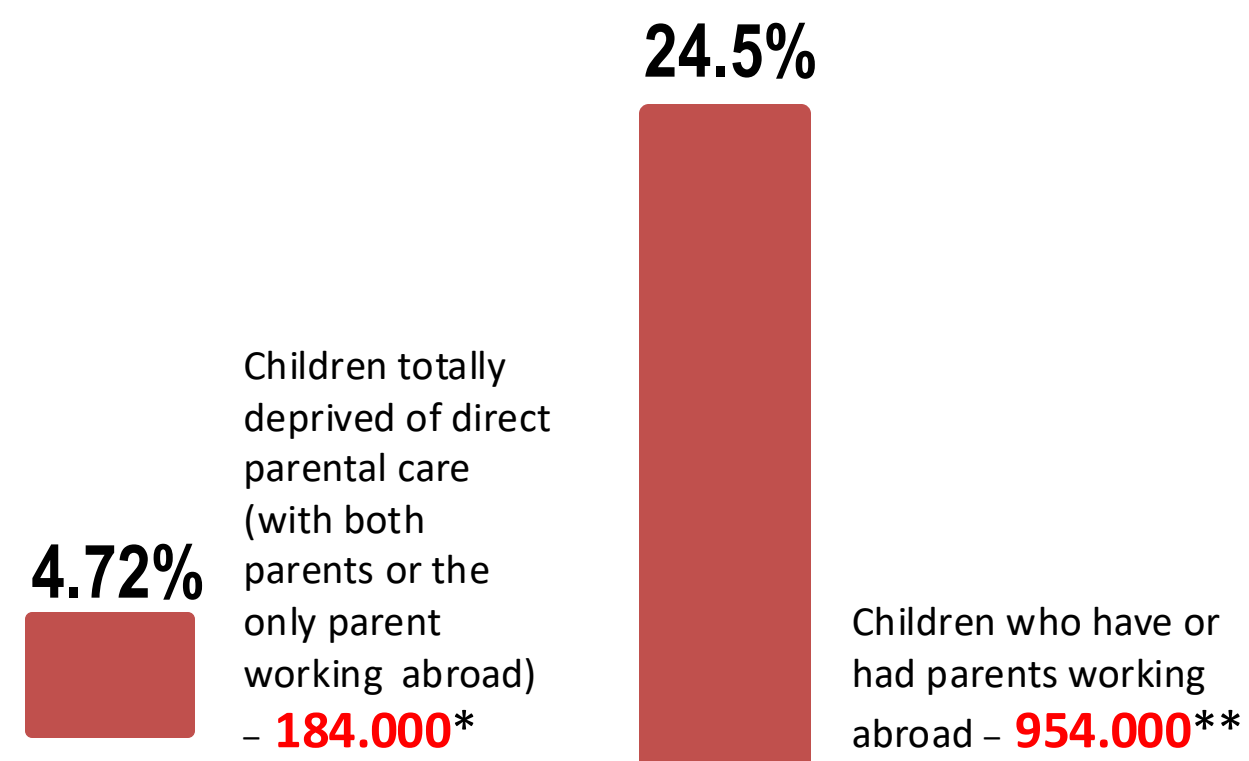
**How:** Partnership of Authorities, airports, child protection services, schools, provision of psycho-social support to children & parents

### Activities:

- Outreach to parents (i.e. at airports, local authorities, schools)
- Psychological, social and educational support for children.
- Legal, social and psychological counselling for children & caregivers/parents

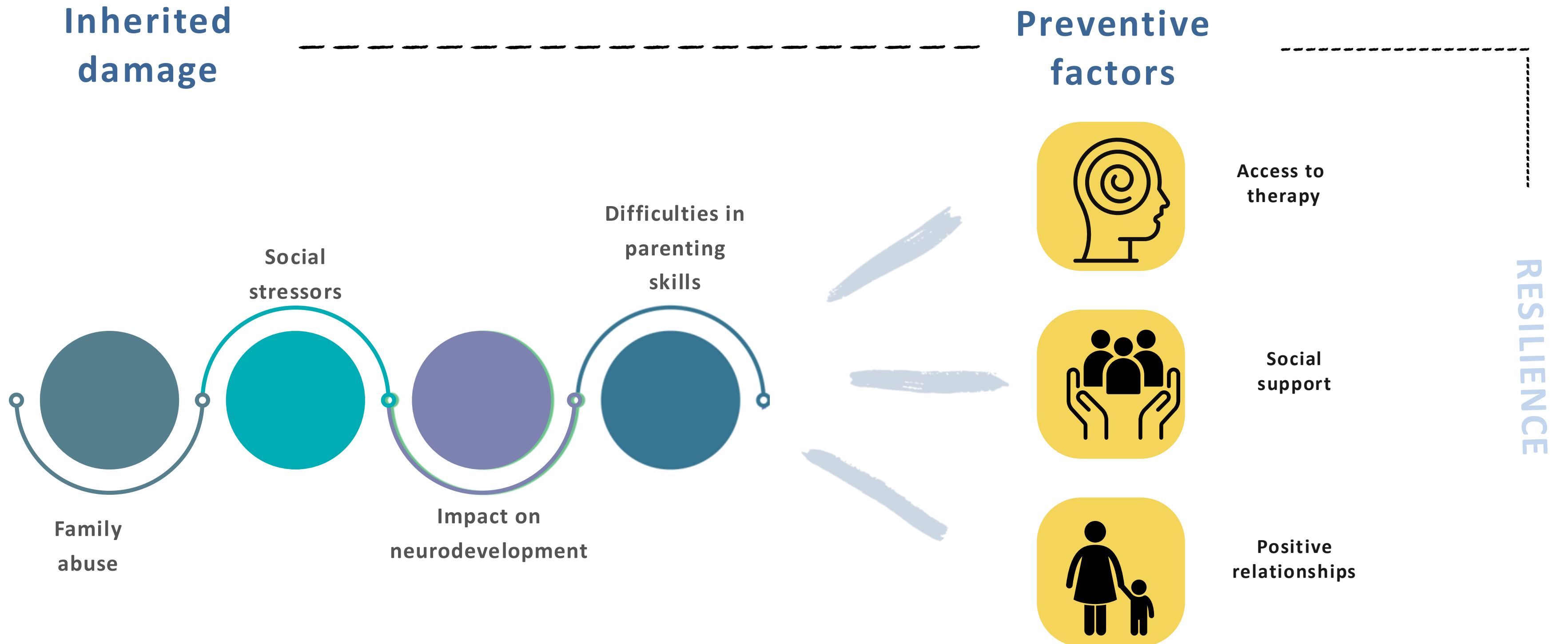
**Multidisciplinary teams** - social workers, psychologists and educators

**Outcome:** 74 % of children have improved school performance, 76 % have improved emotional and social skills



# Preventing transmission of trauma (intergenerational)

**PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITHIN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM,  
Barcelona, Spain**



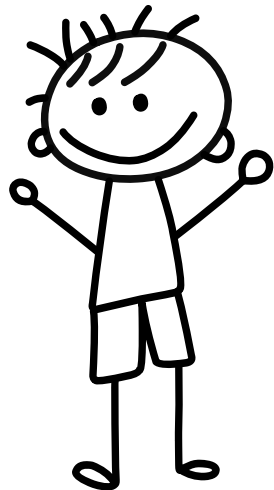


# Preventing transmission of trauma

**PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITHIN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM,  
Barcelona, Spain**

Children's  
psychotherapy

Adult  
psychotherapy



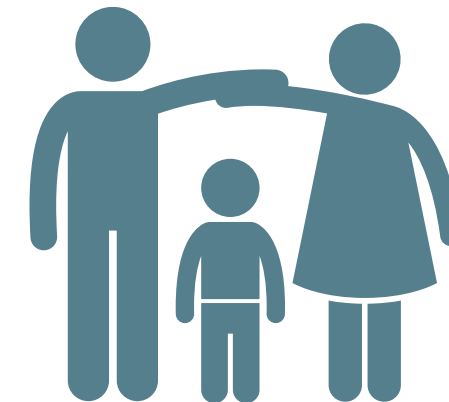
**HEALTH  
SERVICES**

**LEISURE  
ACTIVITIES**

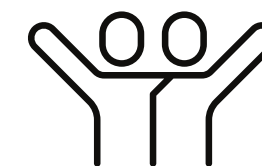
**SHELTERS AND  
FOSTER  
FAMILIES**



**Adult  
trauma**



**Parentin  
g skills**



**Relationship  
improvement**

## Mission, Kortrijk, Belgium

- **Aim:** increase the take-up of local employment and social services and benefits amongst disadvantaged families with young children
- **Collaboration of Health, Employment, Child & Family Support Services**
- **Activity:**
  - **Proactive outreach:** Home visits after birth (district nurses) – 96 % of families with newborns in Flanders get a home visit by family nurse
  - **After 1<sup>st</sup> screening nurse offers additional social support through managers**
  - **Families can take part on a voluntary basis**
  - **Municipal social workers becomes case manager & advocate for families & helps to request support services & coordinates support**
  - **Digital case management programme allows for data sharing with for all involved social care professionals**
- **Evaluation:** better take-up of support, improved social outcomes, revealed gaps and barriers in local support infrastructure



## **Learnings & conclusions from international practice**

- 1. Local ecosystems of community-based social services addressing family's and children's needs such as daycare, parenting support, social counselling, psycho-social support are key**
- 2. Create and sustain networks for cooperation and coordination – integration often is facilitated by informal networks**
- 3. Prevention requires integrated working among social, health, education, child protection, family support and other services for parents and children**
- 4. Professional roles for integration are care navigators, case managers, and care coordinators enhance prevention**
- 5. Partnerships and collaboration agreements between actors facilitate exchange of information and collaboration**

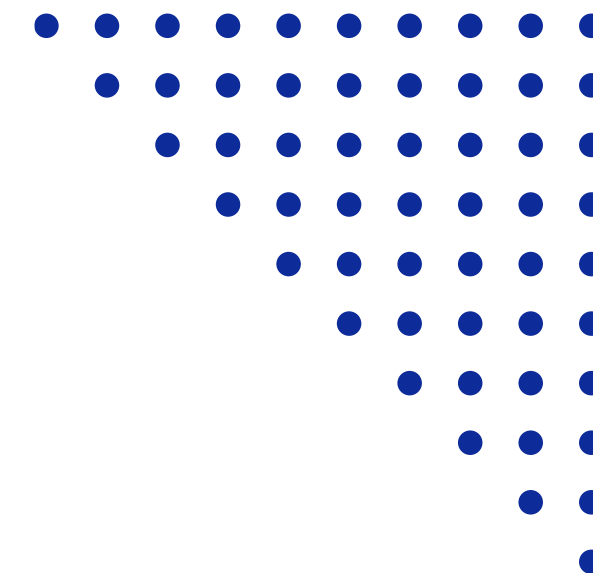


## **Learnings & conclusions international practice**

- 6. Outreach measures should be in place to reach out to the most vulnerable who would not search for support**
- 7. Local authorities are key drivers of prevention and service integration, they know the local support infrastructure**
- 8. Prevention & integration is not a statutory duty, with local finances under pressure, regional and national governments need to provide financial support to the local level to perpetuate prevention services**
- 9. Access to these networks should be facilitated by go-to and outreach services (care navigators, one-stop shops, advisers integrated in (public) services for children & parents such as hospitals, schools)**
- 10. Building trust working with families – is key, best interest of the child must always prevail.**



# Thank you



## Social Media


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## Contact

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European Social Services Conference **2025**

# Transforming Social Services

## Where Care Meets Tech

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

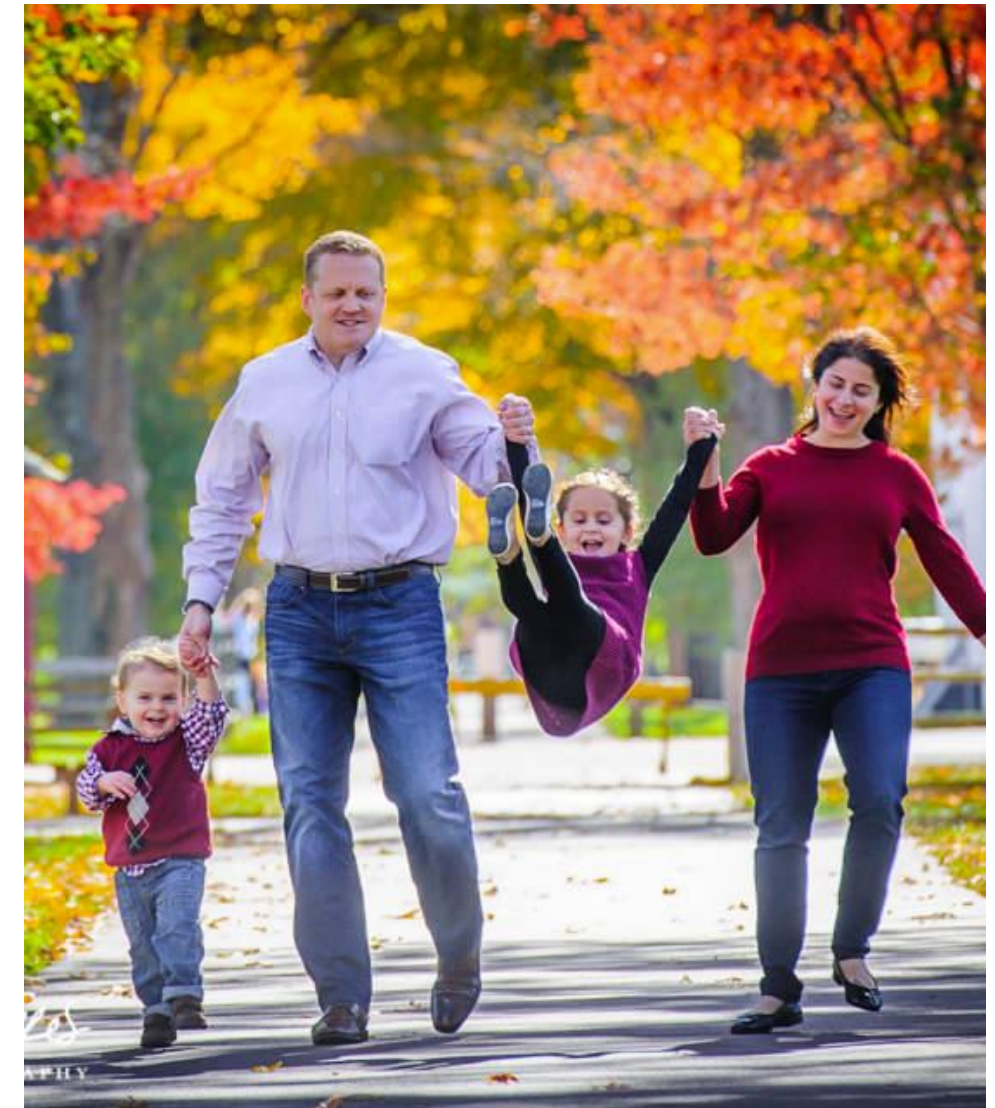
22-25 June 2025,  
Aarhus, Denmark

An illustration showing a white robotic hand on the left and a human hand in a blue suit sleeve on the right, both holding puzzle pieces. One piece is red with a network diagram, and the other is blue with a cityscape. The background features a city skyline silhouette and a network of nodes and lines.

## Example of integrated working

### Mission, Kortrijk, Belgium

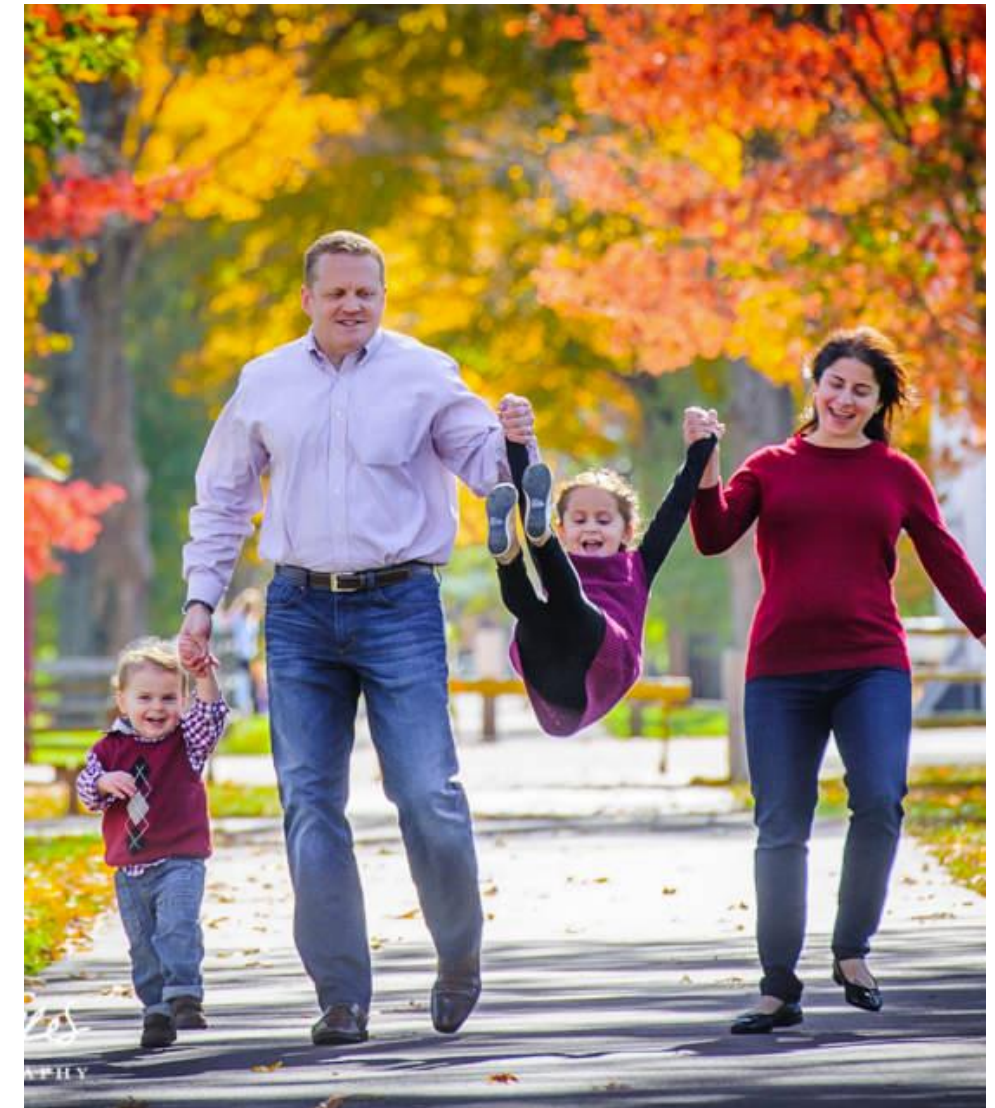
- **Problem: fragmented support services for families, no take-up**
- **Solution: Integrated counselling from birth for young families**
  - **Multidisciplinary team (district nurses, social worker, job counsellor)**
  - **Preventative home visit by district nurses with starter kit**
  - **Individual assessments at home, regular visits,**
  - **Accompanying orientation to all support services in the city**
- **Goal: Improved acceptance of support services and better labour market integration of families with problems**
- **Result: Family support services are better accepted.**



## Example of integrated working

### Meitheal, Tusla, Ireland

- **Target Group: vulnerable families, who are not (yet) followed by child protection services**
- **Goal: ensure the needs and strengths of children and their families are effectively identified, understood, and responded**
- **Lead Practitioners coordinate support & Facilitate the parent and the child or young person to identify the child/young person's strengths and needs**
- **Act as a consistent point of contact for the child/young person and their family**





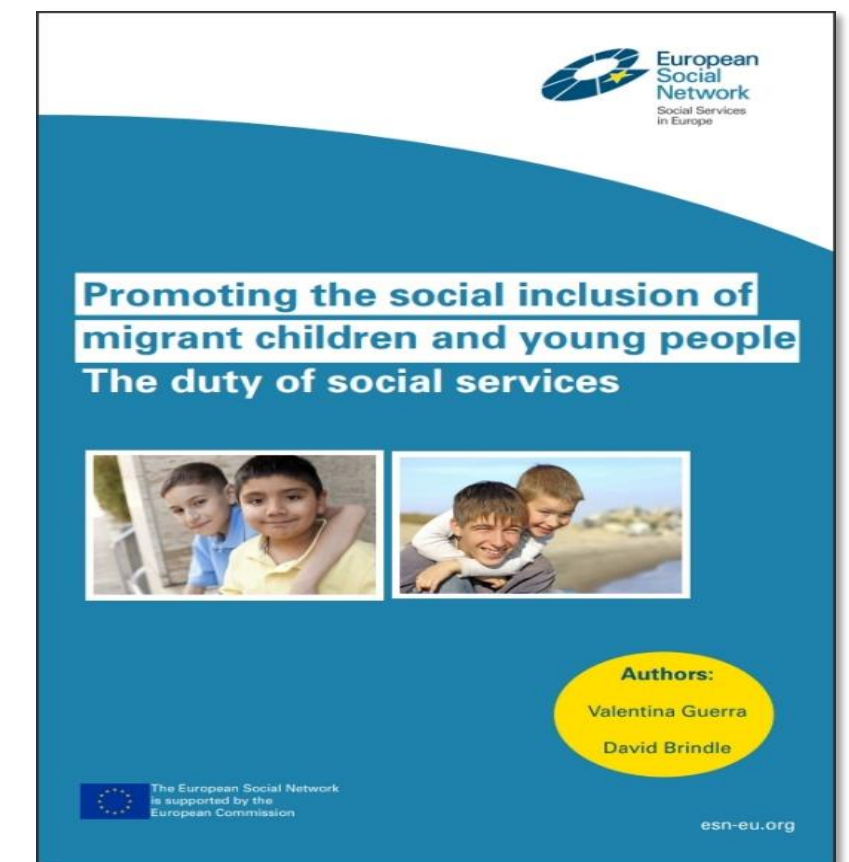
# Our work on Family and Child Support

## Working group on children and families

- Invest in local social work services to support vulnerable children and break the cycle of deprivation
- Coordinate different services to help break the cycle of disadvantage

## Seminar on migrant children and young people: social inclusion and transition to adulthood

- Address issues faced by unaccompanied children from a child protection perspective first, followed by migration/asylum concerns
- Guardianship for unaccompanied children to provide the proper support and coordinate services



# Our work on Family and Child Support

## Investing in children's services

- Promote family and community-based models of care and support for children who need to be in alternative care
- Promote early intervention and cooperation across universal and specialist services
- Independent representation for children in legal procedures

## Working group on integrated care and support

- For practitioners: Equip professionals with skills and time to build trust and a shared vision for integrated services
- For policy-makers: Develop policies at regional and national levels while fostering local, bottom-up initiatives



# Our work on Family and Child Support

## SDGs Role of social services in ending violence against children

- Design services based on children's rights (UNCRC)
- Invest in workforce skills so they can best meet children's needs
- Involve children in designing strategies to end violence

## ESN Response to the Child Guarantee Consultation

- Focus on children in alternative care as they are most vulnerable
- Social Services as corporate parent key to have them involved as well as LAs in the development of multiannual plans

## Council recommendation on Barcelona targets (ECEC)

- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately missing out on formal early childhood care and education



# Our work on Family and Child Support

## ESN Seminar – Enhancing Community Care

- Promoting community-based social services incl. for children
- Practices on children with disabilities & children in vulnerable families

## ESN Seminar – Protecting Children

- Looking at EU & national frameworks such as EC recommendation on integrated child protection & Romanian CP reform
- Local practices of integrated Child protection and family strengthening such as breaking transmission of trauma

