CHRONOLOGY

of the DEVELOPMENT of the HOUSES OF THE CHILD

1980

Late 20th century

2001

Transfer of Competencies

Family support policy is transferred from the federal to the community level, allowing the Flemish Community to develop its own distinct approach.

Local initiatives emerge

Groundwork is laid through decentralised, local policy innovations, including the establishment of opvoedingswinkels ("parenting shops") and socio-cultural parenting education programs.

First regulatory framework

The Flemish Parliament Act of 19 January 2001 provides the first official regulatory framework for group-based parenting support activities, formalising earlier efforts.

2013

2008

2007

Model institutionalisation

Decree of 29 November 2013 on preventive family support is passed. It integrates parenting support into a broader preventive family policy framework + officially institutionalises the Houses of the Child as the centralised model for local service delivery.

Formal recognition

The legislative foundation from 2007 enables the formal recognition and subsidisation of parenting shops. Most Flemish municipalities establish local parenting support consultations.

Pivotal expansion

Decree of 13 July 2007 marks a significant expansion of Flanders' parenting support infrastructure. It introduces a multi-level framework including local and regional coordinators, municipal consultation mechanisms, parenting shops, provincial support points, and the Flemish expertise centre for parenting support (EXPOO).

2014

2016

2018

LAUNCH

The Houses of the Child model is launched across Flanders and Brussels

Introduction OverKop Houses

OverKop houses, low-threshold mental health initiatives for young people, are introduced, creating a complementary service to the Houses of the Child.

KOALA project

The KOALA ('Child and Parent Activities for Local Poverty Reduction') project is launched, an integrated service model within Houses of the Child targeting vulnerable families with very young children.

<u>Strategic roadmap</u>

The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin ('Child and Family') develops a strategic roadmap to help Houses of the Child assess and prioritise services across different life domains.

2022

2021

2019

Comprehensive survey

Opgroeien conducts an extensive survey of all 227 Houses of the Child, providing a detailed overview of their operations, strengths, and challenges.

Innovation grant

24 Houses of the Child receive grants as "innovative projects" to combine preventive family support with other domains like integration, employment, and education.

<u>Agency merger</u>

The Flemish governmental agency
Opgroeien ("Growing Up") is formed
through the merger of Kind en Gezin,
Jongerenwelzijn ("Youth Welfare"), and
part of the Flemish Agency for Persons
with Disabilities, consolidating services
under one umbrella.

Pilot network

Six pilot "neighbourhood-oriented networks" begin operation (running until 2022) to test integrated service delivery for children aged 0-12.

2023

2024

Near universal coverage

The model achieves near-universal coverage, with 227 active Houses of the Child serving 294 municipalities across Flanders and Brussels. Only 6 of Flanders' 300 municipalities remain without one.

New decree for integrated policy

In April, the Flemish Government adopts the new decree for the organisation of an integrated youth care and family policy ("Vroeg en Nabij" - Early and Nearby). This new framework aims to fundamentally reshape support services.

Pilot implementation

In September, the first implementation steps of the 2024 decree begin with six pilot projects to test and refine the new approach.