

## 6. POLICIES AIMED AT STRENGTHENING FAMILY LIFE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

### 6.1 Parental education and support for parenting

**Since when do parenting programmes exist, main providers and beneficiaries, and kinds of qualification of professionals**

#### Austria

Since 1995, the federal ministry has contributed financial assistance towards programmes. In 2000, the legal basis for promoting high-quality parent education projects with funds from the Families Burdens Equalization Fund was created and the funding considerably increased.

Parental education is provided by a wide range of public and private institutions like communities, family organisations, adult education institutions, family counselling centres (5.2), parent-child centres and educational centres.

\* The seminars, workshops, lectures and roundtables are tailored to various development phases of the child or to specific life situations like patchwork families.

A working group established in the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has elaborated a training scheme which is intended to serve as a basis for enhancing professionalism and for quality assurance in the field of parents' education. This scheme is to create comparable standards for expert staff for the whole of Austria, in order to improve the quality of the available parents' education programmes.

#### Azerbaijan

The Family and Children Support Centres in Ghoranboy, Shuvelan and Mingechevir were established in 2005 by the Safe the Children organisation and since 2008 they were transferred to the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and Ministry of Education respectively. These centres render all kinds of legal and psychological assistance to spouses and children. They register cases of violence, conflicts and other stress in families in their community and regularly conduct prevention work with those families.

#### Belgium

Voir plus haut les principaux organismes responsables.

Communauté germanophone

Il y a différents acteurs subventionnés qui proposent ces programmes depuis quelques années. Les cours parentaux existent depuis 20 ans.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

No such programs.

Services:

- upon parents' request
- upon information found by the Service.

## Bulgaria

The Family Centres for Children Project is one of the initiatives that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is carrying out in support of parents with children. This support is aimed at the return to work after the period of birth and raising a child and is consistent with the specific difficulties that parents face on the labour market. In this context, the issue of providing accessible and quality services in child raising which would allow better reconciliation of work and family life of parents is extremely important.

The Project started in 2005 with the goal of developing entrepreneurship amongst women in the field of rendering services in childcare. Family centres are started in the home of unemployed women (priority is given to unemployed nurses, teachers specialising in pre-school and initial pedagogy, women with experience in the field of rendering social services). The state subsidises the salaries and insurances of the nannies. Municipalities give support with the furnishing of the centre and provide one basic meal per day to all children, courtesy of the municipal children's kitchens. Up to 4 children can be raised in one centre, grouped according to their age – from 1 to 3 or from 3 to 5. The daily fee due for every day the child attends the centre is regulated in the contracts between the municipality (as employer) and the parents.

The Project started in 2005 with 11 family centres, opened in the following municipalities: Varna – 1, Vratza – 2, Pazardjik – 3, Sliven – 3, and Yambol – 2.

In 2006, only 3 further family centres were opened under the Project – in the municipalities of Vidin, Dobrich and Shoumen.

In 2007, some changes were introduced in the Family Centres for Children Project which increased the maximum period of subsidised employment to 36 months and continued the Project duration until the end of 2009.

In 2008, the Family Centres for Children Project was included in the National Employment Action Plan and will continue to be implemented. The necessary finances have been secured, salaries have been increased from 220 to 250 leva, insurances are subsidised. As of the present moment, the state supports 5 family centres – 2 in the municipality of Vratza, 1 in the municipality of Vidin, 1 in the municipality of Sliven, and 1 in the municipality of Shoumen; with a total number of 18 children raised.

In Support of Motherhood National Programme started in the beginning of 2007 and will run until the end of 2011. Its basic goals are the promotion of employment amongst women and the creation of appropriate conditions for returning mothers to work through employing unemployed persons to take care of their little children.

The Programme is implemented nationwide.

The Programme is aimed at:

1. Unemployed persons registered in Employment Office Directorates;
2. Mothers/adopters with right to leave for raising a child under the age of 2 (under article 164, paragraph 1 of the Labour Code) and with right to compensation for raising a little child (under article 53, paragraph 1 or under article 54, paragraph 1 of the Social Insurance Code) as well as self-insured persons insured against the 'motherhood' risk;
3. Working mothers/adopters (with the exception of those hired under programmes and measures under the Employment Promotion Act) within the period after the expiration of the leave under article 164, paragraph 1, of the Labour Code, until the child reaches the age of 3.
4. The father/adopter within the period of leave for raising a child under the age of 2 under article 164, paragraph 1, of the Labour Code, until the child reaches the age of 3, when the mother/adopter has died, has been deprived of parental rights or the exercise of parental rights over the child has been awarded to the father/adopter.

Employers under the Programme are the Social Assistance Directorates all over the country.

Mothers who would like to take part in the programme submit a written request to their respective Social Assistance Directorate under their permanent or current address if that is different from the permanent. The request should have an attachment containing a certificate stating that the mother is entitled to compensation for raising a little child under article 53, paragraph 1, or article 54, paragraph 1, of the Social Insurance Code. In cases when mothers want to take part in the Programme within the period after the expiration of the leave under article 164, paragraph 1 of the Social Insurance Code until the child reaches the age of 3, they must present a certificate from their employer attesting to their employment status.

Mothers are entitled to choose the unemployed person themselves, regardless of his or her education and professional experience, with a possible presence of a family connection between them not being an obstacle for participation in the Programme.

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Employment Office Directorates inform and consult unemployed persons regarding the conditions for participation in the Programme; carry out the selection of unemployed persons who are to take part in the Programme; organise the interviews of selected unemployed persons with the mothers; guide approved unemployed persons with letters of recommendation to the employers – the Social Assistance Directorates.

Social Assistance Directorates select the mothers who are to be included in the Programme; carry out orientation for unemployed persons on the application of standards for taking care of little children; conclude individual labour agreements with the unemployed persons according to the provisions of the Labour Code; pay salaries to persons hired under the Programme and insure them in correspondence to the provisions of the Social Insurance Code and the Health Insurance Act; carry out continuous control over the implementation of the Programme.

In 2007, the implementation of the Programme has cost a total of 561,044 leva, of which 422,514 leva have been covered by the General Disease and Motherhood Fund, and 138,530 leva – from the state budget.

The National Employment Action Plan 2008 provides funding for the employment of 1 257 persons under the Programme (4,688,241 leva), of which 3,168,000 leva have been covered by the General Disease and Motherhood Fund, and 1,520,241 leva – from the state budget.

## Croatia

Main providers: Family Centres, civil society organizations.

Family Centre organizes counselling and prevention activities related to marriage and mutual relationships of parents and children, maintenance and other family circumstances requiring professional support; the upbringing of children, adoption, and prevention of all forms of addiction in children and youth; problems with disabilities; participation in daily life after spending some time confined to a correctional institution; encouraging responsible parenting and care for family members; raising children, youth and family's quality of life; organizing lessons for a child; pre-schooling.

## Cyprus

Our response to the question above contains information on when services and programmes were established, the main providers (Government and NGOs), the beneficiaries and the services provided.

## Czech Republic

In 1998 there were 62 government counselling services in the Czech Republic, which provided some 130,000 consultations. These services are established by District Offices or city halls, and their management falls under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In addition there are some 10 non-governmental counselling services.

## Denmark

In Denmark the main providers of social benefits and services are the local municipal councils.

## Estonia

Counselling help lines exist since the beginning of 1990s. Other supporting programs have been initiated during the last 10 years. Parental education is new issue in the Estonian family policy and is currently under development.

## Finland

Family project carried out 2004 – 2007; its results are now implementing on municipalities wider.

## France

Reference to the foregoing explanations.

## Germany

Not mentioned/not applicable

## Greece

Not mentioned/not applicable

## Iceland

(1,2,3) The timing of these programs differ, but there has been a constant increase from 2000 and onward. Main providers are social and health-care services and the target group varies from all parents to groups that are considered at risk.

## Ireland

See previous answer.



## Italy

The Law no. 285/1997 also contains a reference to parenthood support. This law states that the Fund may provide financing – among other programmes – to projects which provide preparatory and support services for parent-child relations to combat poverty and violence, and which provide alternatives to the placement of children into educational and help-oriented institutions. The projects should involve not only Italian, but also foreign children.

The most common objectives of the projects carried out thanks to this law include the following: promoting and strengthening forms of self-help for families; providing parenthood support by disseminating a culture based on sharing experiences; placing emphasis on mutual help and on the skills of parents, who are perceived as partners and not merely as recipients-users of the intervention. There are very few initiatives aimed at creating “parenting schools”, based on the assumption that parents can be taught pre-packed knowledge spreading precepts instead of solving problems. In addition, the strategies indicated to achieve objectives focus highly on the local situation, so they can change considerably according to the context: teaching mothers in depressed areas of Southern Italy to read and write; periods of probation within companies to help single mothers gain access to the labour market; developing the practice of home-visiting in the period immediately after childbirth; providing pedagogical support to the parents of children who do not attend crèche; establishing family-oriented structures and self-managed crèches; building neighbourhood networks, etc. In some cases, the instruments of family mediation and mediation in school are also used to support parenting.

## Latvia

For example in the 2007 the Ministry provided financial support for the nongovernmental organization Latvia's Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health „Papardes zieds” to create a training program about the developing of relations in family “Comprehend what is anger – do not tolerate violence”, which includes methodological materials and an education video as well as informative brochures. According to these materials personnel of the family support centres has been trained.

For persons planning to register marriage psychologist's consultations are being provided in the city of Riga and other regions of Latvia (in the municipality of Kuldiga, municipality of Valmiera, municipality of Tukums and municipality of Rezekne). In the year 2007 in total the psychologists provided consultations for 2 670 persons (in the year 2006 – 1 219 persons). Those consultations were also provided for the adopters, foster families, guardians and families in crisis situations.

The parenting education programme “Emotional Rearing of the Child” realized by the NGO “Centrs Dardedze” in the framework of the State Programme for the Improvement of the State of the Child and Family for the Year 2005 is aimed at educating parents about the methods and principles of the rearing of the child.

In the framework of the project it was possible for 216 parents from different regions of Latvia (among them also parents from social risk groups) to take part in 18 support groups for parents. Additionally specialists were educated about the implementation of the programme.

The programme's aim is to diminish violence against children in families as well as to diminish physical punishment of children. The programme is for parents whose children are not older than 7 but especially for those parents who have difficulties to control the child's behaviour. Yet this programme is suitable for all who wish to learn positive parenting principles and promote the development of their children.

## Lithuania

Conceptual Framework of the State Policy on Child Welfare

In 2003, the Seimas (Parliament) approved the Conceptual Framework of the State Policy on Child Welfare. Later, a draft strategy of the Conceptual Framework of the State Policy on Child Welfare and its implementation action plan 2004–2012 were drafted. The strategy of the Conceptual Framework of the State Policy on Child Welfare is aimed at ensuring the welfare of all children living in the Republic of Lithuania providing for the long-term strategic measures for the state policy on child welfare and the relevant financial resources for implementation of these measures. In the strategy, the child's welfare is understood as creating the conditions for the child to live a full life ensuring his right to protection, maintenance and participation in the public life.

National Program of Prevention of Violence against Children and of Support for them for 2005–2007

National Program for 2005–2007 of Prevention of Violence against Children and of Support for them was developed. The aim of the

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competition to support the projects of integrated services of public and municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations providing support to children who suffered from abuse and him family members. These services included: psychological, social, legal, medical services and counselling, assistance with paper work, provision of temporary shelter and catering. Ten projects were partially supported for the 2007 year.

Programme for Support of Orphans and Children without Parental Care and their Integration into Society 2005–2008

The aim of the Programme is to create favourable conditions for social integration into the society of individuals who have lost parental care and develop independence skills of each individual in foster care. The priority is given to social integration of individuals who live or have been raised in foster care homes and who have lost parental care). The action plan of the Programme provides for creation and practical application of the requirements for social services to children (standards), organization of education for individuals who have lost parental care, providing temporary shelter for them, organization of professional improvement of the staff working with individuals who have lost parental care. In the municipal territory, the children rights protection service implements the key provisions of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensures protection of children rights, protects the rights and legitimate interests of children, organizes and supervises foster care provided to children who have lost parental care.

Budgetary appropriations for the implementation of the Programme activities are planned by institutions in their budgets under the procedure prescribed by the Government.

Child guardianship (care) system reorganization Strategy and implementation plan of actions for 2007-2012 years

The main aim of this Strategy – to respect child's interest and needs and give possibility for them to grow up in the biological family, and for the children deprived from parental care - to create favourable living and growing conditions to prepare them for independent life in the society. The main tasks of the Strategy and it's Action Plan:

- to improve legislation on the child guardianship (care) system;
- to reduce number of children under 3 years in the children homes and homes for infants and give priority for community based services for family and children development;
- to give priority for foster care in the foster families and national adoption of children deprived from parental care;
- to improve quality of services provided by child care institutions;
- to improve after care support children leaving child care institutions or foster care;
- to improve qualification of the staff of child care institutions (qualification of mentors and social workers) - dissemination training material and examples of good practice on foster care and social work with families at social risk.

## Malta

Sedqa, Cana Movement and Caritas are the main service providers.

Parental Skills course of Sedqa has been running since 1994

Homestart by Appogg started in 2006

Beneficiaries of the Sedqa program are parents (no particular cohort)

Beneficiaries of the Appogg program are targeted at families in communities at risk (lower social classes).

## Monaco

Not mentioned.

## Netherlands

Central government can only support local governments in using more effective methods (see box above). Two examples are described below. The fact that they are mentioned here does not imply that they have special government approval nor is it the intention to promote them over other methods. The database of the NJi ([www.jeugdinterventies.nl](http://www.jeugdinterventies.nl)) describes various other methods.

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1) Opstap  
The objective of the Opstap programme is to enable parents to stimulate their children's development, in situations where there would otherwise be a risk of educational deficit. Parents help their children prepare for primary school through a number of exercises and activities that they undertake together with them. These activities help to:

- iv) enhance the quality of mother-child interaction
- v) promote interest in learning
- vi) develop cognitive and language skills.

Opstap involves group meetings and visits to the homes of families with young children. The programme has been run with success in numerous Dutch local authority areas for almost twenty years.

Graduate professionals are responsible for the form and implementation of the programme. They train and coach the 'paraprofessionals' who share the language and culture of the parents. These paraprofessionals are informally known as the 'neighbourhood mothers'. Without them, there would be no Opstap. They assist at the group meetings and visit parents (usually mothers) at home.

2) Home-Start  
According to its website, Home-Start is "a unique voluntary organisation offering support, friendship and a listening ear to families with at least one child under 5 years of age, who are experiencing difficulties" ([www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)). The programme has now been running for twenty-five years in the United Kingdom and for almost ten years in the Netherlands. Some fifty Dutch local authorities conduct the scheme and there is considerable cooperation between them at regional and national level.

Volunteers visit families at home and offer support, friendship and practical assistance. The volunteers, themselves experienced parents, bring with them some straightforward human qualities such as hope, optimism and humour. The parents state their needs, determine the role that Home-Start is to play, and decide exactly how long they wish to make use of the service (the average is eleven months). The organisation tries to achieve a good 'match' between parent and volunteer.

All volunteers are given prior training in this 'demand-led' approach, and can rely on the support of professionals. Contact with parents focuses on the enjoyable, positive aspects of parenting. This helps to foster self-confidence ('empowerment') on the part of the parents. Equality and mutual trust are essential preconditions for a successful parent-volunteer relationship.

## Norway

Not mentioned/not applicable

## Portugal

Most of the parenting support programmes are provided by non governmental social solidarity institutions (IPSS – Private institutions of Social Solidarity) subsidized by the state.

At present the main beneficiaries of these programmes are families at risk and families whose children are in danger of developing a serious backwardness in their development. These families are identified by social services, by the Commissions for the Protection of Children and Young People which function at the municipal level and by the Courts. Parenting programmes are usually integrated into a plan of support for social integration. The duration of the programmes depends on the needs of families and the resources of the community/municipality, varying between a minimum of 2-3 months and a maximum of 8-10 months (Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Family Affairs XXVIIIth Session, 16-17 May, 2006).

Apart from the above mentioned programmes, it is important to mention other types of institutions who give support to parents. The "Centros de Apoio Familiar e Aconselhamento Parental" (Centres for Family Support and Parental Guidance, with multi-disciplinary teams) were created in 2002 in order to provide counselling and support in the prevention of situations of social risk (they also report on the latter). There are currently 17 Centres for Family Support and Parental Guidance.

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## Serbia

Since 2004 the programme titled "I Can Do It Better" has been continuously offered in the Marriage and Family Counselling Service of the Belgrade Centre for Social Work. It is a preventive programme offering specific primary prevention from juvenile delinquency. It is targeted to children and their parents, with aim to prevent developmental problems in children's behaviour.

After first signs of anti-social behaviour, multidisciplinary measures are taken targeted to its factors and cause in order to mitigate unfavourable effects and prevent those aspects that could progress to delinquent behaviour. The Programme encourages new and more purposeful aspects of behaviour.

Evaluation of the Programme indicates that it has been extremely effective for children who were included in the workshop activities. The goal has been achieved, that is, children succeeded in developing new pro-social skills and elimination of anti-social patterns of behaviour as disruptive and aggressive behaviour was reduced and self-respect increased. On the basis of evaluation results, and increasing need of children with anti-social behaviour for protection and support to overcome challenges of psychological and social nature they are facing, and particularly their need for professional staff and experts involved in work with this category of children in schools and municipalities, this programme has been extended to many schools. Upon completion of every cycle, survey is done for effects and results, and to check if the aims have been achieved, namely:

- development of pro-social skills, and
- elimination, that is, reduced anti-social patterns of behaviour with children at risk of anti-social behaviour development, elimination of the aggressive behaviour and enhancement of their self-respect.

The children were highly motivated to participate in the Programme (workshops and Club); according to their teachers, they became more cooperative and adaptable; they are more accessible and acceptable to their peers, and respond better to challenging situations; they accepted well proposed aggression management models.

The evaluation results provided by children, show that transition trends may be indicators of more mature responses of respondents in sense of better control of their impulses, enhanced ability to postpone reactions, reduced level of aggressive tendencies and more frequent recourse to mature defence mechanisms such as rationalisation and sublimation. Detected trends imply that if similar activities are extended to wider sample it would be undoubtedly useful for children involved in this extended project.

On the basis of results of test that parents took, it can be assumed that programme resulted in significant changes in functioning of families who were involved in the programme. Having participated in workshops, these families become more cohesive, less confliction-prone and their members more autonomous and proactive to leisure activities. On the other hand, their interest in culture, intellectual sphere, ethical and religious contents was heightened. Also, they became more goal-oriented, which indicates that they successfully internalised more structured adjustment mechanisms. Finally, these families adopted new and effective patterns of behaviour, and raised general level of their functionality.

## Slovakia

The implementation of various programmes was significantly extended after 2005. The main providers and executors of such programmes are: state administration, local self-governments, private organisations accredited by MoLSAF SR and other private organisations. The main beneficiaries or target groups include children, parents or physical persons who take care of a child in person, families, foster families and adult physical persons (social curatorship of adult physical persons).

It specifically concerns the execution of measures designed to prevent the occurrence of crisis situations in families and to restrict and eliminate negative effects, and educative measures.

Within the measures related to the socio-legal protection of children and families, the restriction and elimination of negative effects endangering the mental, physical and social development of a child or adult physical person, it concerns the offer of help to a child, parents or other adult physical person, the mediation of help upon solving educational or family problems, the monitoring of negative influences affecting a child and family, the detection of causes of their occurrence, the execution of measures restricting the effect of negative influences, the organisation or mediation of participation in programmes aiming towards the assistance upon solving problems of children in families and at school, the solution of educational, social and other problems in families and human relations and the provision of professional help in cases when a child is facing divorce of its parents. The involvement of a child in

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educational-recreation programmes organized by the body in the form of a stay away from home also forms part of social work with a child and its family. The purpose is particularly to ensure a professional approach designed to eliminate or moderate behavioural disorders, develop social skills, gain the necessary social and hygiene habits and to ensure appropriate spending of child's leisure time.

Generally, these measures are designed to support the optimal functioning of families, which also has a direct impact on the support of working parents.

## Sweden

### Parenting programmes

Expecting parents and parents with newborn babies have the possibility to participate in parental groups through the maternal and child health care in the municipality. Most parents participate in these programmes and are very positive to this. After the child's first year there are fewer such possibilities. A goal for the Government is that opportunities should be provided for parents to attend parental groups during the years they have children and that municipalities should adopt programmes for parenthood and for parental education.

The emphasis is to provide parenting programmes on a general basis. The aim is to support parents in their parental role and also to prevent mental health disorders in children. During the last decade a number of high-quality studies have demonstrated the effects on children of parenting programmes. These new programmes are now introduced in the publicly funded systems that are already in place in Sweden. The universal approach is important.

About 99 per cent of all pregnant women are enrolled in the public funded maternal health services. Fathers-to-be participate to almost the same extent as mothers-to-be.

About 99 per cent of all newborn children are enrolled in the public funded child health services. This service offers parental groups an average of five meetings. Out of all mothers, approx. 60 per cent participate after their first pregnancy and approx 18 per cent after the second pregnancy. Only a few fathers participate. In recent years, evidence-based attachment enhancing programmes have been introduced in these groups, especially a programme called ICDP.

Programmes for parents of children of 3-9 years of age have only recently been introduced on a universal basis. Evidence-based programmes like COPE and "The Incredible Years" are used. Courses are mainly offered free of charge for the parents, funded by the municipalities. Usually parents are offered about 12 meetings.

Programmes for parents of children of 10-12 years of age have only recently been introduced on a universal basis. Evidence-based programmes like "Iowa strengthening families" are used. Courses are mainly offered free of charge for the parents, funded by the municipalities. Usually parents are offered about 7 meetings. These include demonstrations of everyday situations shown on video, followed by problem solving and role playing. In December 2006 less than 5 per cent of all parents with one child participated.

## Turkey

The Ministry of Education organized family education programmes from which 654.523 mother and child have benefited from these between 2003-2008 and also 46.444 mother and child benefited from these programmes within 1993- 2003. As sum, 700.967 mother and child have benefited from these programmes. In this context a variety of subprogrammes are carried out. These programmes are

Time Duration:2003-2008

The Number of Beneficiaries

- 0-6 age My Family	252.180
- 5-6 Mother and Child	252.136
- Supporting Father (Collaboration with Mother and Child Education NGO)	7.293
- Family Health Education (Collaboration with TAP NGO)	128.274
- Baby Sitter	14.640

In addition Mother Support Programme: 8-12 weeks programme to support to development of the parental skills of mothers raising 3-11 years old children. From 2003 27 training workshop have been realised, in this context 16667 mother have benefited from the education programmes.

Life Skills Training Program: Between 2006-2010 a programme designed for adolescents between 10-19 years old for developing Communication Skills, Self-Expression, to cope with stress, Children's Rights, Planning future.

Protection of Child and Youth from the Risk: Between 2007-2008 To protect children and youth from the risk and raise them in a healthier 2.086.204 mother and father have benefited from this programme. Within the context of the programme, Harmful Habits of Prevention of risks,

Conduct disorders, Trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder, Cause of Violence and aggression anger control, Leisure evaluation, Communication, Methods for dealing with stress, Understanding and to win Problem Solving Skills, to Determine Friends Selection Criteria are included as main headings.

The content of the family education programmes is creating and making intra-family communication more effective within the context of children rights. Providing families with the information related to the child's mental, physical, social and emotional development. The other main content is empowering women via providing families with the information of women rights, reproduction rights, women health and nutrition. Also these family education programmes are carried by disseminating the developmental and mental education programmes that have to be applied practically under the controls of educators.

As a result of all these programmes carried out by Ministry of Education throughout Turkey,

For family,

- A rise in Mothers and Fathers' self confidence level
- Empowerment of parents in social environments, presentation of themselves
- Making communication more with others within family
- More strong intra Family democracy
- More powerful relations of parents with people out of family
- The decrease in level of violence within family

For children,

- Supporting the development phases of children
- Getting a more balanced nutrition for children
- Knowledge of sharing and good relations with friends
- Learning taking responsibilities
- Behaving positively while their parents are not with them
- The increase in the ratio of attendance to school

In fact, all institutions' services are for different target groups which are women, family, children and disabled people. ASAGEM is of the role of making, main providers of services in the institutions providing services, conscious of the family issues. Disabled groups, the elders, children are the ones in the sphere of the responsibility of SHÇEK.

## United Kingdom

Parenting programmes increased substantially in number in the late 1990s and became a core part of the government's social cohesion agenda following the election of the Labour government in 1997. The main sources of funding are local government (now coordinated through parenting commissioners) and central government programmes such as the Parenting Fund. There is also some trust funding.

The services are provided by a combination of the statutory sector (e.g. CAMHS, social services, health visitors, children's centres) and the voluntary sector (children's charities, parenting charities, churches etc.).

The principal beneficiaries are parents of young children and parents of children/young people with behavioural problems (or, increasingly, those targeted as being at risk of behavioural problems). There are also universal services such as transition information sessions for parents when their children start primary and secondary school.