

Policy to support positive parenting Experiences from the local level in Spain

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Child maltreatment prevention

- Child protection services in many European countries advocate the development of services (e.g. family preservation services) to prevent unnecessary foster care placement of children from maltreating families or those at-risk of maltreatment.
- The typical profile of at-risk parents includes low-income parents who have poor models of parenting, lack personal empowerment, have inadequate life management skills, show inconsistent and unresponsive parenting, are punitive in managing children's behavior or provide inadequate supervision of children and neglect of their basic needs.

Local social services in Spain

- The existing network of basic and specialized social services offers a promising launch pad for family-centered initiatives to prevent child maltreatment.
- However, there is an excessive focus on the personal deficiencies of the parents over their assets and strengths and the family ecology.
- The service mostly attend the high-risk families with resources exclusively tailored for them.
- Parents are not invited to participate in the diagnosis and planning of the intervention but should closely follow the practitioners' recommendations.
- As a result the family dependence of the professional increases and the parental responsibility on family matters decreases.
- There is no culture of evidence-based practices and program evaluations.

Key aspects of Positive Parenting initiative

- Focus on strengthening and empowerment of parents and families by improving the ecology of parenting and promoting parental competences.
- Recognition that all parents need informal and formal support to perform their parenting task, especially those living under adverse circumstances.
- Promotion of a collaborative framework in the context of families-services partnerships.
- Implementation of evidence-based parenting programs delivered through group interventions to support parents in their parenting role.

Three lines of actions

- First line: targeting Practitioners: we have trained the professionals working at the local social services in Spain
- Second line: targeting Researchers: we have organized posgraduate schools and symposia to identify evidence-based programs in Europe
- Third line: targeting Policy-makers: we have developed partnership schemas between nacional/autonomical/local child-protection agencies and Spanish Universities to implement parenting programs at the local social services

First line of action

- To promote the notion of positive parenting among local social services (Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality in partnership with the Spanish Federation of Provinces and Municipalities and two Spanish Universities) plus National Symposia and on-line courses for professionals.



Second line: contacting researchers with the support of the European Association of Developmental Psychology

- Identifying evidence-based parenting programs in Europe that fits with the principles of the prevention science applied to the social domain.
- Through invited symposia and postgraduate schools (Winter School in Tenerife last January) we have identified sound methodological research in Europe focused on the evaluation of parenting programs.
- As a result, we have developed recommendations for researchers to design, implement and evaluate adequately their programs to promote positive parenting as well as ideas of how to disseminate the research results into practice.

Third line of action: To introduce parental group intervention at local social services

- Partnerships among Spanish Autonomous Communities, local social services, NGOs, and Universities.
- Using this resource for promoting parental competences in casework with families.
- Meeting the best conditions for program implementation.
- Providing intensive training to professionals.
- Rigorous evaluation of the program at a large scale.
- Coordination and integration of the program into the network of social resources.

Conditions of implementation at the community level

- To have the program officially supported under a partnership schema and to be advertised properly
- To assure program fidelity and rigorous evaluation
- Careful group selection and previous work by home visiting
- Training and continuity of the group monitors and full integration into the intervention team at the social services
- Practitioners work in collaboration with parents avoiding lecturing and dependency
- Transport facilities, refreshments and parallel activities for their children
- Cultural group activities offered along the program



Parents with children aged 0-6 years
Group version: 20 weekly sessions of 2 hours
Home visiting version: 8 weekly sessions of 2 hours

Implemented in :

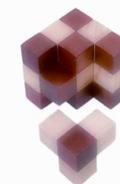
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Departamento de Educación



Hestia

Asociación para la Intervención
e Investigación Familiar,
Psicoeducativa y Social



Aprender juntos, crecer en familia



Parents with children aged 6-12 years
14 weekly sessions of two hours

Implemented in

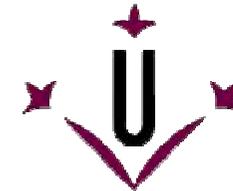
Network of NGOs
receiving funds from la
Caixa



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Departamento de Educación

Vivir la adolescencia en familia

Programa de apoyo psicoeducativo para promover la convivencia familiar

M^a José Rodrigo López
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M^a Luisa Máiquez Chaves
Miriam Álvarez Lorenzo
Sonia Byrne
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Beatriz Rodríguez Ruíz



Se Implementa:

Junta de Comunidades de Castilla La Mancha
Ayuntamiento de Lleida
Corporaciones Canarias

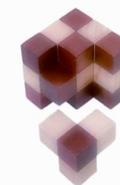
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Parents with adolescents aged 12 to 18 years
20 weekly sessions of 2 hours



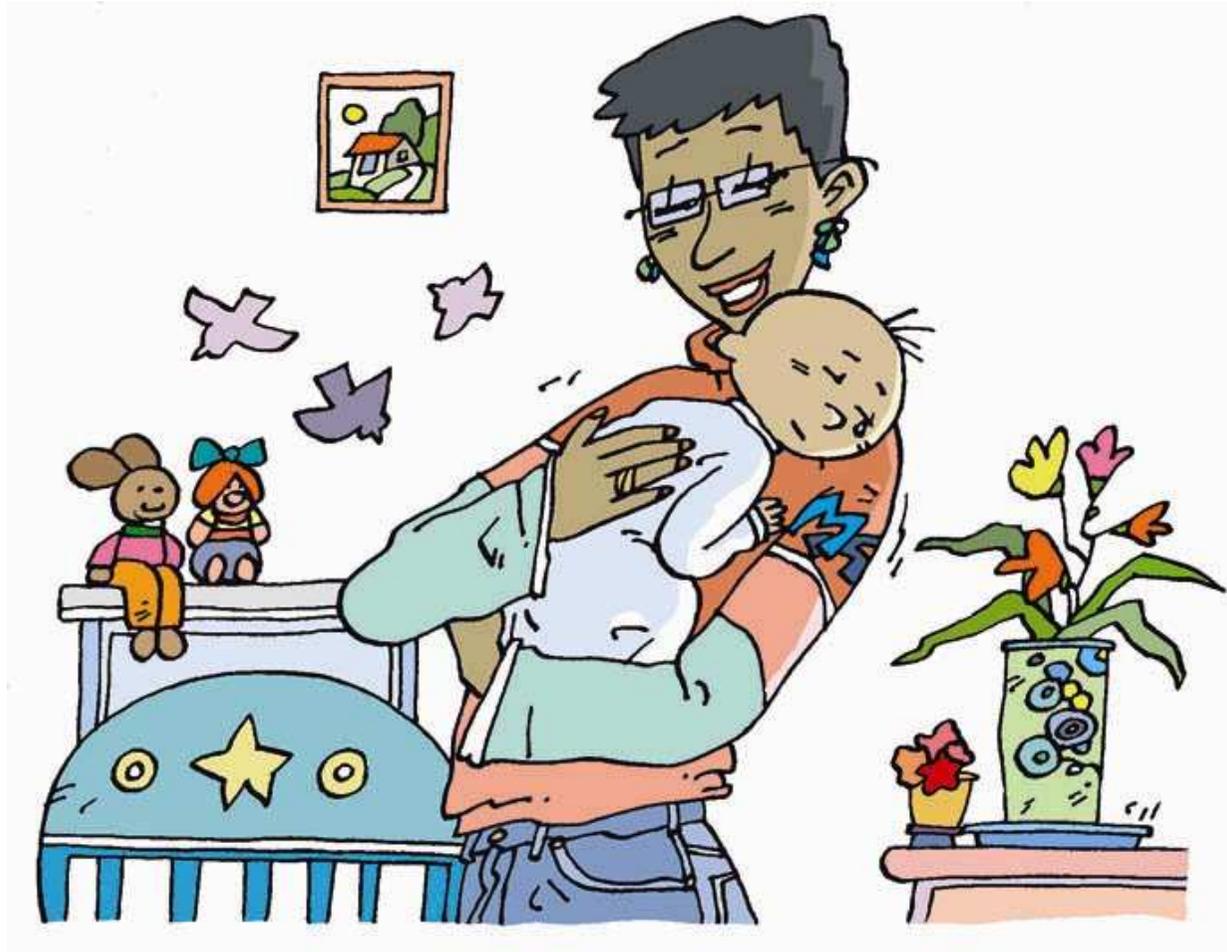
Hestia

Asociación para la Intervención e Investigación Familiar, Psicoeducativa y Social

Program contents

- Affect in the family
- Child-rearing practices
- Organization of everyday life
- Communication and conflicts
- Healthy peer relationships
- Coping with daily stress
- Social support
- Family-school collaboration
- Regulating the use of TICs

Module 7: attachment in early childhood: secure caregiving



Module 7: attachment in early childhood: avoidant caregiving



Module 7: attachment in early childhood: rejectful caregiving



Module 7: attachment in early childhood: anxious caregiving



Program results on parents

- Decrease of parents' endorsement of simple and passive views of child development and increase of complex and active views of child development and education;
- Replace permissive-negligent and coercive child-rearing practices with inductive practices;
- Promote good communication and constructive resolution of conflicts;
- More shared activities in the family
- Foster parental agency and autonomous functioning by increasing a sense of self-efficacy, internal control, couple agreement and accurate role perception;
- Improve the parental network of informal and formal social support.

Program results on professional development and quality of social services

Those parents with better programme results had professionals that reported:

- discover new indicators of parental strengths,
- praise families for being less dependent on the professionals,
- show a better casework organization,
- create an informal support network among the practitioners,
- achieve better coordination between agencies,
- show improvements in the use of community resources.

Impact on Child Protection Services

- Since the programs were implemented in several communities the % of reported cases of child maltreatment among high-risk families attending the programs (around 20% of the total sample) has dropped from 25% to 0.
- The programs facilitates an increased professional surveillance of the family, leading either to the earlier detection of a problem or the prevention of such a problem arising in the first place.

Impact on family policies

- Recent approval by the Spanish Congress of Deputies of a proposition urging the Government to take actions to promote the principle of “Parentalidad Positiva” (6th June, 2011), in coordination with the Autonomous Communities, local municipalities and social agents.

Challenges

- To guarantee the sustainability of the evidence-based programs as a normal resource for family intervention at the local level
- To assure partnership schemas for their implementation and development
- To ensure profesional training and development and a cooperative work with other agencies and services
- To create comprehensive and integrated systems to serve the families and empower the communities.
- To continue promoting the quality standards and good practices at the local delivery system