

Early Childhood Interventions. Figures, Data and Facts about Supported Families

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Summary

Background

Since the beginning of 2015, regional early childhood intervention networks have been set up or expanded in all provinces according to an Austrian basic model. The aim of these regional networks is to provide need-based support to parents-(to be) and families with small children in stressful life situations and to ensure equal health opportunities.

Regional implementation is accompanied by the National Centre for Early Childhood Interventions (NZFH.at). Its tasks include the provision of uniform documentation and the analysis of the data collected. The specially developed Early Childhood Intervention Documentation System FRÜDOK has been operated as online documentation since July 2015.

Methods

This annual report provides information on the structure of early childhood intervention in Austria, presents the FRÜDOK data for 2017 and compares them with the data from 2015 and 2016. In addition, key data from the Vorarlberg Netzwerk Familie, which maintains its own documentation system, are included. The report is rounded off by an in-depth analysis of psychosocial health in the context of early childhood intervention. All contacts and family supports with initial contact to a regional early childhood intervention network until 31 December 2017 are the basis of data.

Results

Early childhood intervention has been in place in all nine provinces since 2016. As of 31 December 2017, 24 regional early childhood intervention networks were available, which are active in a total of 62 political districts. In 2017, there were 1,557 families in Austria who were placed with regional early childhood intervention networks by experts or friends, acquaintances and relatives or who made contact themselves. A total of 1,816 families were supported through the networks in 2017, and 844 family supports were completed.

The analysis show that the primary target group – pregnant women and families with infants and young children up to three years of age in burdened life circumstances– is reached very early and very well, as in 2016: almost a third of the family supports began during pregnancy; around 60 percent of the children born at the beginning of the family support were younger than one year. In line with the objective, more families were reached in burdened life circumstances: e. g. slightly more than one fifth of the supported families are single–parent families, at least half of all supported families were at risk of poverty and one third of the primary caregivers had at most a compulsory school leaving certificate.

Another objective of early childhood intervention is to promote the psychosocial well–being and health of supported parents/families. This year's in–depth analyses show that in one fifth of the family supports in the years 2015–2017 a psychological problem in the family was noted as the reason for the support. At the beginning of the support, the family supporter assesses the psychosocial health of the primary caregiver: in 40 percent of the families, this was documented as a burden, in 20 percent as a resource. Depending on the perception of the psychosocial health of the primary caregiver, there are differences regarding the type of contact, the situation of the family, other resources and burdens as well as the duration and intensity of the support.

Conclusion

This annual report clearly shows that the first start–up phase of early childhood intervention in Austria has been completed and the existing structures have been further expanded in favour of the target group. The stability of the data, compared to the previous year, points to a continuous establishment of early childhood intervention according to the basic model and shows that the target group continues to be well reached.

For future reporting, it is above all the completed family supports that will enable in–depth analyses.

Keywords

Frühe Hilfen, early childhood intervention, documentation

The full report is available in German and can be downloaded here:

<https://www.fruehehilfen.at/de/Service/Materialien/Publikationen/Fruehe-HilfenbrZahlen-Daten-und-Fakten-zu-den-begleiteten-Familienbrspan-stylefont-size-16pxFRUeDOK-Jahres-bericht-2017.htm>