

Quality Standard for Early Childhood Interventions

Version 2

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Summary

Background

In the course of the implementation of the regional early childhood intervention networks in the years 2015 to 2017, it became clear that a quality standard, which serves as orientation for the existing networks and for further expansion, is needed and desired in addition to the already established instruments for quality assurance. The development, testing and evaluation of a quality standard for early childhood interventions was therefore explicitly included in the mandate of the National Centre for Early Childhood Interventions (NZFH.at) for the 2018–2021 funding period.

Methods

The Quality Standard “Frühe Hilfen” (Early Childhood Interventions) was developed by the NZFH.at with the involvement of some regional coordinators and consultation of the project committees. The quality standard is based on the theoretical principles and recommendations of the technical concepts for early childhood interventions in Austria. Prior to the preparation, an analysis of the current state of implementation of central quality criteria and a literature search were carried out. The draft quality standard was also subjected to a comments procedure. The method chosen for drafting the quality standard largely corresponds to the processes customary for quality standards. The quality standard was evaluated in 2018 to 2021 and subsequently revised based on the results.

Results

The Quality Standard “Frühe Hilfen” defines quality requirements for 10 structural quality criteria (national centre, coordination, steering group, network management, team leading, multi-professional team, expert committee, supervision, training/further training, resources) and 8 process quality criteria (making contact, four-eyes principle, acceptance of families, core elements, duration and intensity as well as completion of family support, documentation, networking). For the time being the quality standard has only a recommendatory character.

Conclusions

The Quality Standard “Frühe Hilfen” supports a long-term quality development process. The evaluation confirmed the defined quality criteria. In the process of the establishing a sustainable system of “Frühe Hilfen”, it should be decided which parts of the quality standard should have binding status in the future and which should continue to have a purely recommendatory character.

Keywords

early childhood interventions, quality standard