

Estonia's Parent Support Strategy

Summary

Estonia's parent support strategy is built on a universal, national offer of parenting support which is comprehensive and 'layered' (providing universal support for all parents, targeted support for those at risk, and intensive support for complex cases).

The approach is grounded in the universal child health and development system (midwives, family doctors, family and school nurses) who provide routine guidance from pregnancy through adolescence, including check-ups, vaccination visits, and counselling.

Nationally supported parenting programmes include an adapted Incredible Years programme (parents with children aged 2-8), the Incredible Years Advance programme (parents with of

children aged 3-12), and in 2026 will pilot Triple P Baby and Triple P Online Baby, and the "Invest in Play" parenting programme for parents of children aged 2-12, including an ADHD module for parents of children aged 8-12 with ADHD-related challenges.

Parents also have access to evidence-based guidance, tools, and advice on the national parenting portal [Tarkvanem.ee](https://tarkvanem.ee). Parents of those with more complex needs can access Multidimensional Family Therapy and separated parents can also access family mediation. New Family Hubs (community-based centres focused on early identification of developmental delays and prevention) offer play sessions, counselling, and training for parents of young children.



Target audience

- Parents



Objectives

1. the Estonian child and family policy is knowledge-based and uniform in order to support the sustainability of society;
2. Estonia is a country that supports positive parenting and offers the necessary support to raising children and being a parent in order to improve the quality of living and future of children;
3. 3. the rights of children are guaranteed and a functional child protection system is created in order to value each child and the kind of safe environment that supports the development and well-being of children;
4. 4. Estonia has a combined system of benefits and services that support the adequate economic coping of families in order to offer constant security to families; 5. men and women have equal opportunities for reconciliation of work, family and private life in order to promote a quality everyday life that meets the needs of each family member.' (Laste ja perede arengukava 2012-2020)



Delivery settings

- National and local



Professionals involved

- early years providers,
- healthcare professionals,
- education professionals



Leading organization:
Ministry of Social Affairs



Countries
Estonia

How can this practice be implemented?

- Build a shared cross-sectoral mindset and accountability system.
- When initial funding becomes available, try to embed pilots in the system from the start (rather than standalone projects) - shifting from a “project-based mindset” is harder later.
- Invest in administrative and digital infrastructure to scale support (e.g. managing 100 parents per year is very different from managing 1,000). Scaling requires automation, streamlined processes, and clear governance.
- Establish quality assurance and fidelity monitoring as early as possible, ensuring to fund what works.
- Have clear expectations, supervision systems for practitioners and routine data collection to ensure programmes are delivered as intended and achieve the desired outcomes.



Implementation Highlights

Estonia follows the national Prevention Science Council’s intervention assessment framework which classifies programmes based on evidence quality, implementation requirements, and contextual fit.



Impact

Estonia’s approach has improved the parenting support offer and creates a system which is hinged on empowering parents across all levels of need.

What makes this a good practice?

Impact: does it work?

Effectiveness and efficiency

The 'layered' approach to parenting support creates support for all families through universal support via the child health and development system with additional layers of targeted support for those in need of additional services and advice. This creates a system where families are supported to the appropriate levels as needed.

Reach: who can benefit?

Equity and access

The universal layer of parenting support is delivered primarily through Estonia's universal child health and development system, providing routine guidance to all families. The targeted additional support gives access to further elements of support without stripping access for families who may, at least at some stages, require less intervention.

Transferability and scalability

While the strategy does have some uneven regional availability of services which can affect access, the pilot format allows for transparency and evidence-gathering. This means repeatability across areas of Estonia is possible and programmes can be evidence-based when scaled and expanded. Further, Estonia's emphasis on quality assurance supports transferability and scalability.

Integration: keeping it going and working across sectors

Sustainability

Estonia has identified that embedding pilots of programming within their systems rather than as stand-alone projects creates more successful schemes. While funding stability can be difficult and is often secured through external, time-limited funding (e.g. EU Structural Funds), the implementation of pilots can support its sustainability long-term.

Intersectorality

Information sharing between sectors (health, social, and education) can be difficult, but cross-sectoral coordination is expected to be improved by Estonia's newly developed Parenting Support Action Plan. The Plan sets shared goals, responsibilities, and cooperation across government and service levels.

References and additional tools to favour translation

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