



Ana Almeida, Orlanda Cruz & Ana Catarina Canário

Evidence-based family and parenting support evaluation strategies: The position of EurofamNet

EuroFamNet is a pan-European family support network currently funded as a COST Action by the COST Association aimed to inform family policies and practices towards the ultimate goal of ensuring children's rights and families' well-being. EurofamNet is doing so by building collaborations between researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, children and families, public and private agencies, and general society.

This document is collected within the work of EurofamNet **WG3 "Quality Standards and Evidence-based Programmes"**.

For further information visit: <https://eurofamnet.eu/working-groups/wg3>

Key messages

Evidence-based family and parenting support interventions in community-based services contributes to improve its organization, clarifying goals and target populations, and allowing stakeholders to take informed decisions about the specific programmes to provide to the families according to their needs and characteristics.

- ▶ The framework of positive parenting has undertaken a reiterated quest for children's rights-oriented and culturally sensitive approaches. Evidence-based programmes have helped to introduce and develop models of intervention across the different areas of family and parenting support services in full compliance with the promotion of children's rights, and acknowledging an all-inclusive framework, addressing family diversity, social backgrounds, health and mental health conditions, and family developmental cycles (in accordance with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee, 2021);
- ▶ In line with the concept of progressive universalism, to represent an effective preventive effort, evidence-based programmes should be available for all families, in a wide range of intensity of interventions, to adequately address each family's needs and characteristics;
- ▶ The adoption of evidence-based programmes by community-based services is strengthened and reinforced by the interface and cooperation of researchers and scholars with community-based practitioners and policies;

Implications

To embed evidence-based programmes in community-based services demands for attention both from policy and practice levels.

Policy implications

- ▶ It is important to develop partnerships between family and parenting support services and universities or external agencies so that the professionals working in the services receive support regarding the training, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based programmes;
- ▶ Professionals working in the field of family and parenting support should be trained to deliver evidence-based programmes. Multi-agency delivery and a transdisciplinary practice approach are encouraged, to prevent that duplicate services are provided to the same families;
- ▶ The evidence-based programmes should be presented as resources available in the communities to promote family wellbeing and child development. By doing so, the programmes become part of the communities' resources, and programmes sustainability is fostered.

Practical implications

- ▶ When delivering evidence-based programmes to families and children as rights' holders, professionals should adopt a family-centered approach, developed in a collaborative framework, established on a relationship of trust with the families;
- ▶ Programme evaluation is a fundamental and ubiquitous component in evidence-based programmes. A pluralistic approach is required since different evaluation methods and their value depend on their aptness to answer the question being posed within a specific context and with a specific population.


Challenges

- ▶ Even though the European policies place a strong emphasis on the "evidence-based" as an underlying principle for the investment and transferability of good practice, the use of evidence-based programmes as a service provided at community-based settings needs to be further developed;
- ▶ To develop professional networks including researchers, scholars, family and parenting support professionals and stakeholders, to implement evidence-based programmes' evaluation strategies undertaking a pluralistic approach at the community level.



More information

 **Ana Almeida:** aalmeida@ie.uminho.pt

 <https://eurofamnet.eu/contact>

 <https://www.facebook.com/Eurofamnet/>

 @eurofamnet

Any citation of this document should use the following reference:

Almeida, A., Cruz, O., & Canário, A. C. (2022). *Evidence-based family and parenting support evaluation strategies: The position of EurofamNet*. [Policy brief]. EurofamNet.