# Early Childhood Interventions Guideline for Family Support

## Version 2.

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## Summary

Background

Since 2015, early childhood intervention networks have been developed and established in Austria. In addition to an ideal model, a quality standard as well as various guidelines and position papers provide orientation. An important core element of these services for families is family support. The present “Guide to Family Support” is intended to serve a common understanding of the function and tasks of professionals working in family support and to offer practical guidelines for action. It is therefore aimed at both new and existing family support workers, but also at professional managers and other persons responsible for implementation.

Methods

The guidelines were developed in a joint process by the National Centre for Early Help (NZFH.at) and family support workers from various networks. In the course of a major update and consolidation of the professional basis of the Austrian Early Intervention Programme in 2023, the guidelines for family support were also revised. This version was also subjected to an internal and external feedback process.

Findings

The tasks of family support lie in a combination of relationship work and pilot function, both of which are equally important for the success of the service. Evaluation and accompanying research confirmed the importance of the basic attitudes and competences described in the guidelines, which family support workers should bring with them. These include appreciation, empathy, patience, reliability, solution and resource orientation, gender and cultural sensitivity, but also the ability to communicate openly and non‐violently and the focus on the individual situation of the family, the development of the child and the concern for empowerment. The guide also deals with essential organisational and legal framework conditions as well as structures that support the implementation of family support. In addition, it also offers concrete suggestions for the implementation of this demanding activity and points to helpful material.

Conclusion

The guide makes an important contribution to the quality assurance and uniformity of a service that must be adapted both regionally to the available structures and to the individual situation and needs of families.

Keywords

Early childhood interventions, early intervention, equity, health promotion