# Early Childhood Interventions The Austrian „ideal model“

## Version 3

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## Summary

Background

From 2011 to 2014, the GÖG conducted a basic project on behalf of the Health Ministry on the starting point and framework conditions for the establishment of early childhood interventions in Austria. In the course of stakeholder participation, the desire to develop a uniform concept for *Frühe Hilfen* (Early Childhood Interventions) in Austria was formulated. In consultation with the ministry, it was decided that this should be presented in the form of an “ideal model”. A first version was published in 2014 and served as an important basis for the broader establishment of regional early childhood interventions networks, which started in 2015. In 2017, the ideal model was updated on the basis of the practical experience gained. In 2023, a major revision was carried out, taking into account the further development and roll‐out of the Austrian Early Childhood Interventions Programme that has taken place in the meantime.

Methods

The development of the ideal model was originally based on the results of the basic project as well as on the experiences of the *Bundesinitiative Frühe Hilfen* (Federal Early Childhood Interventions Initiative) in Germany and the Vorarlberg model project *Netzwerk Familie*. A first concept was drafted parallel to the inventory and repeatedly discussed with the various project committees as well as in stakeholder workshops and events during the course of the project and, where necessary, adapted on the basis of this feedback. Over the years, scientific evidence and practical experience were further processed and specific topics were dealt with in depth. All of this has been incorporated into the current revision.

Results/Findings

A uniform basic model of early childhood interventions was developed for Austria, which can be adapted to regional conditions. This basic model provides for a universal basic offer for all families in combination with regional *Frühe‐Hilfen‐Netzwerke* (Early Childhood Interventions Networks) for needs‐based support for families in stressful situations as an indicated offer. The basic offer is intended to provide support for all families, limited in time and scope, in the sense of health promotion. Within the framework of the early childhood interventions networks, family supporters continuously accompany families in stressful situations and refer them to the appropriate services from the multi‐professional system, which is coordinated by the network management, according to their specific needs. A national centre for early childhood interventions accompanies the implementation of early childhood interventions at the regional level, especially with regard to uniformity, quality assurance and also in terms of (resource) efficiency.

Conclusion

The ideal model supports a coordinated and, if possible, uniform implementation of early childhood interventions in Austria, whereby the outlined model is to be realised in the longer term and step by step on the basis of the available and widely accepted orientation framework. The Austrian Early Childhood Interventions Programme has succeeded in relieving the burden on many families over the past few years, thus making an important contribution to healthy growing up and equal health and social opportunities.

Keywords

Early Childhood Interventions, health promotion, early intervention, equity, family support,  
network management