



Services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment in Europe

EPR survey

The survey items are designed to gather information about services to people with disabilities in the mainstreaming environment offered by members of EPR. In this study we are interested in learning about programmes and good practices that support inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstreamed environment in any of the following areas: early intervention, education, vocational training and employment, housing services and social care. Please note that, for each of these areas, we are only looking for **practices that support inclusion**.

By 'mainstreamed environment' we mean the common society, that is, environments that are not segregated or targeted to special groups. A regular school, the open labour market or a community facility that is opened to the general public are examples of 'mainstreamed environments'.

If your organisation offers several of these programmes or services, please select the one you consider more innovative or most successful and complete the survey. If you would like to provide information about an additional programme/service you can also do it by completing another survey (maximum two programmes/ services).

There may be some items in the survey that are not applicable for the selected programme or service. In these instances, please indicate "not applicable".

Although the term "programme" is used in this survey, it can be replaced with "service" or "practice" in all occurrences.



Organisational Information

Name of the Organisation: Theotokos Foundation

Country where the organization is located: Greece

Title of the Programme/Service/practice: Early Intervention

Contact Information (Include the name and relevant contact data for the primary contact person who can provide technical expertise regarding this Programme):

Vaia Arsenopoulou, Speech Therapist, Email: varsenopoulou@theotokos.gr

Study Criteria	Description of the Study Criteria
I. Programme Information	
I (a) Goal of the Programme/service	State the goal of the Programme/Service in clear terms. The goal of the program is to support the inclusion of as many children as possible in mainstream kindergartens and elementary schools, by providing intensive intervention from an interdisciplinary team, both on site in group and individual programmes and off site with integration support.
I (b) Outcome Measures of the Programme	State the Outcomes Measures for the children/adults involved. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of children enrolled in the programme.• Number of individual intervention goals achieved.• Length of time in the on-site programme before the integration program begins.• Frequency, type and amount of support needed for the child to be fully integrated into the mainstream kindergarten (i.e. 5 days per week)• Number of children successfully integrated into the mainstream schooling system.• Satisfaction rates from the Parent Satisfaction Questionnaires.• Satisfaction rates from the Kindergarten Teacher Satisfaction Questionnaires.• Feedback results from government agencies which also assess the children's progress.• Results from Follow-up studies of past students regarding the continuation of their progress in the mainstream schooling system.



<p>I (c) Theory used for the Programme</p>	<p>State the theoretical principles that underline the programme/service.</p> <p>International research has shown that Early Intervention for preschool children reduces the need for special education and treatment during the school age period.</p> <p>Within the framework of a bio-psycho-social model, individualised programmes are created based on the child-centred approach using principles from developmental, cognitive and behavioural theories.</p> <p>An transdisciplinary approach is applied, providing intensive individual programs and small group programs (6:1 student-to-teacher ratio)</p> <p>Empowerment of the parents through active engagement in therapy sessions.</p> <p>Mainstream inclusion principles such as the use of an integration aide are used as well as gradually increasing the number of attendance days and gradually decreasing the amount/type integration support provided until full inclusion is achieved.</p>
<p>I (d) Year Programme was initiated and milestones in development</p>	<p>Identify the date when the Programme started.</p> <p>2000 Commencement of the Early Intervention programme</p> <p>2002 Cooperation with local government organizations and referral sources</p> <p>2003 Early Intervention programme presented on Theotokos Foundation's internet site</p> <p>2005 Annual funding granted through the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust (this allowed one extra staff member to function mainly as an integration support aide)</p> <p>2006 Commencement of the kindergarten integration program</p> <p>2007 Cooperation with the local childcare centres' and kindergartens' principals as well as meetings with the Ministry of Education's District Counsellors.</p> <p>2010 Simulation of kindergarten conditions in the classrooms</p> <p>2010 Application of the TEACCH model in the classrooms</p> <p>2010 Presentation of the Early Intervention Programme at the EPR Annual Conference in Athens</p> <p>2013 Two hundred brochures were sent to neighbouring paediatricians, childcare centres and kindergartens in order to promote earlier detection and raise awareness.</p> <p>2014 Collaboration with all the Child Care Centres in the Municipality of Ilion in order to raise awareness, to strengthen networking and to formalize the identification and referral process.</p> <p>2014 Presentation of the Early Intervention Programme at the Pammakaristos Day Conference</p> <p>2014 Grant from the Hellenic Initiative USA</p>



	Throughout the years there has been frequent participation in continuing education in order to improve practice (eg. training in approaches such as Sensory Integration, Floor-Time, SCERTS, ABA)
I (e) Staffing patterns of the Programme	<p>Identify the number of staff by titles and responsibilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yannis Papakonstantinou, Director “Theotokos Foundation” – Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist. 2. Marie - Ange Widdershoven, Psychologist – Psychotherapist, Head of Mental Health & Social Care Services. Provides family & therapeutic support as needed. 3. Mirella Giannakopoulou, Department Supervisor, B.Sc. Special Education, M.Sc. Special Education & Early Intervention. Collaboration with other local agencies and related professionals with regards to informing about and promoting the service. Provides integration support when needed. 4. Aphrodite Korogiannaki, Scientific Coordinator, Developmental Psycholgist, Family Therapist, 25% of full time employment allocated to the programme. Supervises individual and group goals, assessment of new intakes, parents' counselling, staff training. 5. Ioanna Sarkiri, Social Worker, Social Work Degree, 25% of full time employment allocated to the programme. Collaboration with other local agencies and related professionals with regards to informing about and promoting the service. Key liaison person for communication with kindergartens, school principals and district counsellors. Follow-up communication with parents and schools. 6. Giannis Rapanakis, Occupational Therapist, B.Sc. in Occupational Therapy, S.I. Certificated. Full time employment with 90% of time allocated to the program. Key integration support person. Presentations at seminars/conferences informing about and promoting the program. 7. Vaia Arsenopoulou, Speech Therapist, B.Sc. Speech Pathology, full time employment with 80% of time allocated to the program. Promotes community participation through presentations aimed at kindergarten and primary school teachers and other professionals. Collaboration with other local agencies and related professionals. Provides integration support when needed. 8. Sophia Papagianni, Group Educator, B.Sc. in Preschool Education, 100% full time. Integration support person. Presentations at seminars/conferences informing about and promoting the program. 9. Elli Xanthopoulou, Group Educator, B.Sc. in Preschool Education, 100% full time. 10. Vasiliki Themeli, Child Psychiatrist, Medical Doctor, 40% of time allocated to the programme. 11. Alexandra Klimentopoulou, Developmental Paediatrician, bi-monthly contact 12. Giannis Ageletopoulos, Special Physical Educator, bi-weekly group programme 13. Maria Papanikolaou, Art Therapist, group progamme once a week.
I (f) Physical location of	Describe the Programme’s location(s).



<p>the Programme</p>	<p>The Early Intervention Programme is located on the grounds of Theotokos Foundation at Theotokou 2, Ilion, 13122, Attiki, Greece.</p> <p>The Municipality of Ilion is located in the north-western suburbs of Athens. The children participating in the programme come mostly from the surrounding suburbs and access the site using the Foundation's bus service or by using their parents' private transportation. The site is situated close to local shops, a park and a cinema-shopping complex, making community excursions easily accessible.</p> <p>When the children begin the integration process this is carried out at their local kindergarten so as to ensure a smooth transition from kindergarten into primary school.</p>
<p>II. Client Information</p>	
<p>II (a) Targeted clients admitted</p>	<p>Identify the admission criteria including age, gender, disability, and any other qualifying characteristics.</p> <p>2.5 to 4.5 year old boys and girls are admitted with diagnoses such as developmental delay, immaturity, language disorder, ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorders, learning difficulties. The service does not cater for children with physical disabilities. The children must have a valid diagnosis from a government service. The children's parents should have social security but this is not mandatory as a certain number of children from poverty stricken families are admitted per year.</p> <p>On an annual basis, 12 children are admitted. One of our aims is to increase the number of children participating in our programme.</p>
<p>II (b) Number of clients currently in the Programme</p>	<p>Identify the number of current clients in the Programme.</p> <p>Currently, for the school year 2015-2016, there are 12 clients attending the program.</p> <p>Over the years 1-12 clients are integrated into mainstream schooling (with an average of 5.4 clients per year).</p> <p>81 clients are being supported through follow-up services (contact with parents and/or kindergarten and school teachers).</p>
<p>II (d) Involvement of the Family members</p>	<p>Describe how the family members are oriented to and involved in the Services provided.</p> <p>Family members are oriented to the service during the initial intake procedure. A thorough case history is taken and information about the current situation is obtained by the social worker and child psychiatrist and/or developmental paediatrician. The family members are informed about the program in general. Once the child has enrolled and attended the program for a short while, the interdisciplinary team prepares the Individual Education Program (IEP). The parents attend a meeting with the interdisciplinary team where the strengths and needs of the child are discussed as well as the structure and functioning of the service. The parents are informed about the goals on the IEP and are welcomed to participate in this procedure.</p> <p>Parents are actively involved in their child's daily program</p>



	<p>through the use of a communication book in which both the parents and the teachers/therapist exchange written information about the child's activities, progress and any other concerns. The teachers and therapists also prepare home activities to encourage parent participation and to ensure carryover of skills learned into the child's life.</p> <p>Parents attend training and counselling sessions with the teachers or therapists. The training usually involves the presence of the child so as to improve the parent-child relationship and to empower the parents to support their child's development and generalisation of skills in their home environment.</p> <p>When the interdisciplinary team assess that a child has acquired the necessary skills to begin kindergarten integration, the parents attend a meeting to discuss the child's progress and the integration procedure. The kindergarten is contacted and the days of attendance confirmed. Parents are supported throughout this procedure as it is usually a stressful time for them considering that their child is leaving the supportive early intervention program and entering a kindergarten classroom where he/she will be one of 25 children.</p> <p>The service's integration support worker is responsible for informing the parents about the child's progress at the kindergarten.</p> <p>In collaboration with the kindergarten teacher and the parents the days of attendance are gradually increased and the integration support decreased.</p> <p>Once the child has become integrated fulltime into the kindergarten, parents are still able to contact the service with any concerns they have.</p> <p>The service also provides support to parents by providing information on afternoon therapy centres that may be needed or on recreational programs available in their neighbourhoods.</p>
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III. Programme Activities, Services and Intervention

<p>III (a) Activities during the Programme targeted to the clients</p>	<p>Describe the Programme activities that are targeted to the clients.</p> <p>The integration program is individualised, based on the child's needs. The type and frequency of support the integration aide provides is adapted according to the level of stress the child experiences when confronted with the new environment and the amount of behavioural, cognitive or social difficulties presented. The support provided is also adapted according to the kindergarten teacher's needs, [which can range from just a few visits followed by telephone communication to full support of the child].</p> <p>Ongoing support is provided to the kindergarten teacher and the parents even after the child is fully integrated in the kindergarten. Disability awareness-raising activities are conducted at childcare centres, kindergartens, schools, community services, professional seminars and conferences.</p> <p>The activities leading up to and during integration ensure a smooth transition from the special service to the mainstream service, increase the likelihood of successful integration of the child and overall decrease the number of children at risk of needing further special education during their schooling.</p>
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III (b) Activities involving the family members	<p>Describe the services and involvement of the family members and other close friends and support persons working with the client.</p> <p>Onsite parent training and counselling sessions. Home visits for modifying the home environment, for intervention concerning routines and daily living skills and for training in transfer and generalisation of acquired skills. Referral to other services such as afternoon therapies and recreational activities.</p>
III (c) Activities involving community partners	<p>Describe services or activities that involve community partners.</p> <p>Collaboration with referral sources such as public diagnostic centres and hospitals. Collaboration with local childcare centres in conducting screening assessments. Collaboration with mainstream schooling heads such as principals and district counsellors. Collaboration with a neighbouring infant and child orphanage (Mitera Centre) Integration into- mainly- mainstream kindergartens and primary schools near the children's homes.</p>
III (d) Activities targeting community partners	<p>Describe services or activities targeting community partners.</p> <p>Presentations and discussions concerning child development and early intervention at childcare centres and kindergartens. Presentations and workshops regarding the Early Intervention Program or the benefits of early intervention in general at seminars and conferences held by relevant professional organisations, tertiary institutions, hospitals and community agencies. Supervision of university students during their practical and clinical placements (psychology, occupational therapy, preschool education and speech therapy students). Excursions to playgrounds, children's museums, movies, theatre.</p>
IV. Public Authority/Legislative Information	
IV (a) Legal Basis for the Programme	<p>Identify the legal framework of the programme.</p> <p>Greek Law 3699/2008 concerning special education and the education of people with disabilities. Greek Law 1566/1985 concerning compulsory education Ministerial Decision No. 27922/Γ6, of Law 3699/2008 regarding the provision of parallel support to children with ASD in the schooling system.</p>
IV (b) Funding base	<p>Identify the source(s) of the funding for the Programme (i.e., the government agency providing the support), the percentage of expenses it covers, the rate of co-payment per client if existent, and the length of time for the funding.</p> <p>The Early Intervention Program is one of the programs of Theotokos Foundation therefore expenses are covered by the</p>



	<p>same funding sources. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual government grant from the supervising Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare. This covers 15% of total expenses. • The National Health Services Provider Organisation covers a daily rate per service user as well as the disability benefits from the parents' social security. In total, this covers 56.5% of total expenses. <p>The annual expense per client amounts to just over 8.000 euro. Exact details per client in the Early Intervention Program are not calculated but they are higher than the aforementioned amount. The remaining costs are covered by donations from charities and other individuals.</p> <p>Specifically for the Early Intervention Program, annual funding was received up until 2013 from the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust. This ranged from 60.000 to 30.000 annually.</p>
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V. Programme Directions

<p>V (a) Challenges with the Programme</p>	<p>Identify challenges to develop the social participation and inclusion of your clients in mainstream society.</p> <p>Our belief is that people with difficulties are entitled to receive the same or even better educational opportunities as all other members of society. By communicating and cooperating with local schools and communities we benefit society by raising awareness about children with mild difficulties and the programs that support their integration into the general education system. Early intervention for preschool children reduces the need for special education and treatment during the school age period. Unfortunately, some mainstream teachers and specialists have difficulty in accepting change and in acknowledging the value of supported integration programs thereby not allowing the presence of our integration support aide in their classrooms. Meetings have been held with School District Counsellors in order to raise awareness about disability and to foster better communication and understanding of our program.</p>
<p>V (b) Opportunities with the Programme</p>	<p>Describe the opportunities that are available for the students and the organisation for developing and implementing the Programme.</p> <p>Parallel support of children at kindergartens. Training of parents. At least once a month outdoor programmes in the community area.</p> <p>In general it is an innovative and exemplary program for Greece therefore it has many opportunities for development. There is much interest from all partners involved as well as interest from funding sources. Awareness raising activities have to continue in order for parents and paediatricians to overcome the stigma associated with children attending special education settings.</p>
<p>V (c) Suggestions for strengthening the Programme</p>	<p>Identify specific recommendations that will benefit other organisations that are replicating the Programme.</p>



	<p>More frequent home and community training for parents is needed. Trying to raise the number of referrals to our programme from public assessment services has been a challenge, therefore closer cooperation is needed with these services. Official recognition as a programme from the Ministry of Education is needed and a licence to practice integration with parallel support into kindergartens.</p>
<p>V (d) Additional Programme comments</p>	<p>Please give additional information to explain what makes this practice/service/programme particularly interesting or successful</p> <p>Parents are not asked to pay extra money other than their social service funding. Several scientifically approved educational methods are used. Large interdisciplinary team from all areas of expertise. Combination of group training and individual sessions. Future plans are to utilise modern technology and provide tele-counselling via Skype. Also to organise an afternoon Counselling Service for parents as individuals or in groups.</p>

