

**Time frame**

Since 2013

Stakeholders

Political legislative
 Political executive
 Extra-curricular education
 Prevention and health promotion
 Civil society

**Institutional framework****Structure-related quality criteria**

Strategic orientation
 Designing the provisions/
 living spaces
 Collaboration
 Coordination
 Efficacy review

The starting point

The city of Wil had declared that early childhood care and education (FBBE in German) was a legislative aim for 2013–2016 and stipulated that a comprehensive concept should be developed for it. A report on early support in Wil from 2012, the demographic starting point and an analysis of the range of provisions for early support all served as a basis for the aims and measures proposed in the concept. In addition, the canton of St. Gallen approved the Early Support cantonal strategy in 2015, which was based on the Marie Meierhofer Children's Institute's Primokiz model, as was the concept developed by Wil.

Aims

The concept should serve as a basis for creating supportive conditions for all children in their early years in Wil. Suitable measures should be defined for coordinating early support provisions with each other and enhancing them in the best way possible by ascertaining the status quo and by networking between the various stakeholders involved.

Target group

- Parents and their children from 0 to 4 years of age

Costs

- Around 40,000 Swiss francs were invested in developing the concept. This does not include the project team's working hours.
- A total of 190,000 Swiss francs are allocated for funding the play groups in the 2020 budget. 79,000 Swiss francs are budgeted for the agency. This means there is a total of 269,000 Swiss francs available for early education.

Project progression

An interdisciplinary group from the fields of integration, school, social affairs and play groups developed the concept based on an evaluation report by the Marie Meierhofer Institute, led by the head of the Social Affairs, Youth and Older People department. The project team was advised by an expert in Primokiz from the Jacobs Foundation. An external consultancy was involved in developing the new tariff regulations for play groups. Specialists in early support were included from the outset.

This created a specialist unit that is a point of contact for parents and specialists, that helps to raise awareness and ensure the quality of provisions, that supports networking between the stakeholders in early support and that implements early support projects. Stakeholders working in the early years field each receive specialist input and the opportunity to network at the annual networking meeting. Additional lunch meetings twice a year are also in the planning. Various issues were discussed in interdisciplinary working groups. The increased contact improves direct collaboration in specific cases.

Success factors

- The systematically developed concept that is based on a careful status assessment and sets clear priorities;
- The structured responsibilities through the creation of the specialist unit, which enables coordinated action and the advancement of the projects;
- Personal contact between the specialist unit and stakeholders working in the early years field, as well as with organisations with overlapping interests (e.g. school, integration, specialist units in the canton);
- Finding appropriate access to the various target groups.

Challenges

The development was mainly provided by the mid-levels of the administration. We did have two external specialists available, but no additional internal resources. The expenditure should not be underestimated. The concept was created in an era of municipal austerity measures. The applications and financial scope were therefore estimated very carefully and with an eye on political reality. In view of the positive effects of investing in early support, one could be more courageous nowadays.

Conclusion

The expansion of play group utilisation was implemented as the first project: thanks to the funding approved by Parliament, families receive a financial contribution to play group costs. This means children are now visiting the play group who have not used any provisions before, some of them even come twice a week. The managers of the partner play groups in the city meet to discuss various matters four times a year, led by a supervisor.

All families benefit from provisions that are more visible and easier to access. New information material has been created. Other provisions that directly benefit families are being developed, e.g. parent education events or toddler groups with parental advice.

Contact details

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