sciendo

ARS Medica Tomitana - 2021; 4(27): pag. 170 -174

doi: 10.2478/arsm-2021-0033

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MATERNAL CARE NETWORK IN ROMANIA. DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT, BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF CHILD CARE ALTERNATIVE

Lupu Mihaela-Gianina[1], Franciuc Irina[2]

[1]General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection, Constanta
[2] Faculty of Medicine, "Ovidius" University of Constanta

Mihaela-Gianina Lupu

email: mihaela.gianina@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The development of family-type services was an important step in the goal of closing the classic state institutions with forms that would better meet the individual needs, identified in the situation of each child in difficulty.

The topic addressed in this paper refers to the evolution of the maternal care network since the date of legislation of this form of special protection in our country, analyzing aspects of legislative changes, innovative models, directions of development, the current operation of the system benefits but also obstacles encountered over time.

Keywords: foster parent, institutionalization, maternal care network

Introduction

Placing a child in foster care has a number of advantages, including material costs that are much lower than the costs of caring in residential institutions, while non-material effects, such as healthier, more harmonious psycho-social development and a better prognosis (1, 2). Much better socio-medical conditions for that child have also been shown to exist. The development of family-type services was an important step in the goal of closing the classic state institutions with forms that would better meet the individual needs, identified in the situation of each child in difficulty.

The topic addressed in this paper refers to the evolution of the maternal care network since the date of legislation of this form of special protection in our country (3), analyzing aspects of legislative changes, innovative models, directions of development, the current operation of the system benefits but also obstacles encountered over time.

The main goal is to identify a special protection measure for the benefit of the child, which corresponds to the degree of bio-psycho-social development, by placement in a professional foster carer, when the stay in the biological family is not possible.

As a result of the studies carried out, the network of foster carers needs to be developed, on the one hand, as a viable alternative for deinstitutionalization (4) and, on the other hand, to meet the current needs of children and young people beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of the special protection system.

Materials And Methods

With regard to the tools used to determine the direction of the development of the maternal care network, it is necessary to make a clear assessment and analysis of it, of the children in it, of the context in which they are there and of the circumstances which led to it. when placing them. Thus, the documentation, the social survey, the annual reports within the "General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection" of Constanța were used, between the years 2017-2019.

Specific Objective

Study on the consolidation and development of the current maternal care network in order to improve the level of professional skills of specialists in the social assistance system to ensure quality services, adapted to the complex needs of children in the protection system.

During all this time I had a proactive involvement in all the specific stages of the implementation of the project for the development of the maternal care network, as a trainer, all the solutions identified in this process being the intense activity of a team of professionals.

As a result, the current network will need to be significantly developed and properly formed in order to meet the major challenges of providing quality care for children currently protected in institutions, whose profile may have some peculiarities compared to that of children cared for in present in the maternal care network.

This research could be carried out with the support of the "General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection" Constanța.

The project focuses on increasing the quality of the social assistance system, following the development and introduction of procedures and tools, as well as increasing the number of foster carers in the community.

1. Recruitment, evaluation, and certification of professional foster carers (PFAMP) at the level of the "General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Constanța".

Steps:

- Recruitment / identification of PFAMP.
- Evaluation of applicants.
- PFAMP preparation process.
- Attestation of professional foster carers.
- Placement and care of the child at PFAMP.
- Placement monitoring.
- PFAMP continuing education / training.
- PFAMP support services.
- Evaluation of PFAMP activity.

2. Monitoring the child benefiting from the protection measure for a professional foster carer in accordance with the Mandatory Minimum Standards

The visits of the social worker to the home of the professional foster carer for monitoring the child's placement are of four kinds:

- periodic visit according to S.M.O. specific.
- the evaluation visit of the ways of implementing the recommendations established at the previous visit (if certain dysfunctions were found in the way of carrying out the A.M.P. activity, visits will be carried out in order to evaluate / re-evaluate the situation);
- visit made at the request of the A.M.P.
- visit made as a result of a notification.

3. Objectives and measures taken under the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child

"National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child 2014-2020" was approved by "Decision no. 1,113 of December 12, 2014 ". Through it, it was proposed to close old institutions and develop community services.

The Council of Europe's Strategy for the Promotion of the Rights of the Child 2012-2015 contributed to the elaboration of the mentioned document. We recall that at European and international level, there is a political commitment to the transition from institutional to community care for all groups of beneficiaries.

It highlights key standards agreed at European and international level, which call on countries to develop community-based services as alternatives to institutional care.

The unitary goal of the "National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child 2014-2020" focuses on promoting investment in child development and welfare by all state institutions and authorities, while respecting the rights of the child, meeting their needs and universal access to services.

At the same time, the "National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child 2014-2020" aims to ensure policy coherence and strengthening at sectoral level, between different levels and governance mechanisms, as well as their consistency with the objectives set out in European documents.

Regarding the training process for professional foster carers within the developed projects, the course support includes the following teaching modules (theory and practice hours): Planning one's own activity, Developing knowledge and skills, Teamwork, Training skills Health care, Monitoring the child's health, Monitoring the child's rights, Integration of the child in the family of the professional foster parent, Integration of the child in social life, Assisting the child in the educational process, Communication with the child, Management of documents and documents regarding the child, Ensuring the integrity a harmonious relationship with the natural family or with another person / family.

4. The context and justification for the need to support the expansion of the maternal care network

At the level of 35 counties from Romania, an evaluation of the maternal care network was carried out. Following this assessment, it was concluded that the maternity care network was outdated. The average seniority as a professional foster carer was 11 years and about 2% of the entire network were MPAs with the first certification in 2017. It was also found that about 92% of foster carers cared for the upbringing and care of 1-2 children, and throughout their careers they cared for 1-4 children.

In the context in which the deinstitutionalization process must continue, given Romania's international commitments, it is easy to predict that for children currently in the current institutions that will be closed, alternative solutions for family protection must be identified. Of these, maternal care is by far one of the first solutions for which the "General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection" will opt, given that it offers the highest degree of compatibility with the family environment.

The planned initiatives are aimed at increasing the quality of services for children without parental care, by improving the skills of specialized staff, respectively the 15,000 foster carers, increasing the number of professional foster carers by developing the current network of foster care by about 4,000 people, development of tools / procedures / mechanisms designed to contribute to optimizing and increasing the quality of services for children in the protection system.

At the same time, by implementing the training program and hiring new foster carers, the project also contributes to the objectives of the Employment Strategy, by increasing the chances of vulnerable people to enter the labor market, with foster carers from both rural and non-rural areas. the Roma community.

Results

The skills acquired in the training program by the foster carers and the specialized staff of the system will have long-term effects, in terms of increasing the quality of services provided to children in the protection system by applying at the level of subsequent interventions (future services for children in the system protection) of the new standards and knowledge gained through the program, including in rural areas and Roma communities.

Dissemination of project results at national, regional and local level, within the information events organized on the website of the project partner institutions, as well as through the materials used, will contribute to an increased level of information and awareness about the project and its benefits for the group. thus, providing an opportunity for increased involvement of local communities as well as society as a whole.

The results obtained will be multiplied later at the level of foster carers who will enter the system after the project completion date, each partner (DGASPC) will multiply the results obtained at county / sector level, and the ANPDCA applicant will ensure the multiplication of results at national level. for the sustainable development of the maternal care network.

Table 1 Grouping children from maternal placement by age groups

YEAR	Children 0-3 years old placed at A.M.P.	Children over the age of 3 placed in the A.M.P
2017	163	311
2018	152	343
2019	144	372

Table 2 Classification of children benefiting from the protection measure for professional foster carers - according to the degree of disability

YEAR	2017	2018	2019
Children in severe grade	11	22	33
Children in high grade	14	14	10
Children in middle grade	23	37	50
Children in low grade	10	11	6
Total	58	84	99

In order to achieve the research objective - Study on consolidating and developing the current maternal care network in order to improve the level of professional skills of specialists in the social assistance system to ensure quality services, adapted to the complex needs of children in the protection system, a numerical presentation of the requests for applications regarding the entry into the profession, of the situation regarding the qualification course in the profession of professional maternal assistant from the level of Constanța county in the period 2017-2019 as well as a situation of the admissions of the children in maternal assistance.

Table 3 Certified situation of professional foster carers 2017 – 2019

AMP on 01.01.2017	256
AMP on 01.01.2018	272
AMP on 01.01.2019	280

Table 4. Statistical analysis of children placed in professional foster care by place of entry

	Children present	Enter	Total on 31.12.
01.01.2017	458	81	474
01.01.2018	474	100	495
01.01.2019	495	116	516

Discussions

In relation to the fulfillment of the general objective formulated in the study of this paper - the reduction of the number of institutionalized children and the provision of human resources necessary for the placement of children separated from the natural family, resulting in optimizing and increasing the quality of services for children. The study found that in the period 2017-2019 the maternal care network, as a viable alternative to deinstitutionalization, increased and responded to the needs of children and young people benefiting from the special protection system.

Maternal care is the first solution in the best interests of children at risk for whom it is necessary to establish a protection measure in the conditions in which it offers the highest degree of compatibility with the family environment.

The placement of the child in a professional foster carer is also a desirable option for institutionalization, if the care of the child at risk in the biological family is not possible.

Strong points:

• Implementing the importance of having knowledge about the development, education and maintenance of the child's health;

• Implementation of modern ways and techniques of communication with the child;

• Expanding the network of professional foster carers.

• Attachment development

Conclusions

Conclusions identified from the study on the consolidation of the current maternity care network in order to improve the level of professional skills of specialists in the social assistance system, to ensure quality services, adapted to the complex needs of children in the protection system. maternal professionals with a

tendency to increase it throughout the period in question.

References

1. Levy C, Whitfield EA, Gutman R. Medical foster home is less costly than traditional nursing home care. Health Serv Res. 2019;54(6):1346-56.
2. Smyke AT, Zeanah CH, Jr., Fox NA, Nelson CA, 3rd. A new model of foster care for young children: the Bucharest early intervention project. Child Adolesc Psychiatr Clin N Am. 2009;18(3):721-34.
3. Legea nr. 272 din 21 iunie 2004 privind protectia si promovarea drepturilor copilului, (2004).
4. Zeanah CH, Humphreys KL, Fox NA, Nelson CA. Alternatives for abandoned children: insights from the Bucharest Early Intervention Project. Curr Opin Psychol. 2017;15:182-8.