Executive Summary
Recommendations

These recommendations have been adopted in Brussels on 27 November 1999, at the final meeting of the Action Project on Mental Health Promotion for Children up to 6 Years by Mental Health Europe and the partners of the Action Project.

CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH FIRST

Children have the human right to be protected and supported in their development towards well-being and a mentally healthy lifestyle, including coping skills, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability and medical conditions. Mental health promotion in early life leads to a wide range of positive outcomes, including improved mental health, less risk of mental and behavioural problems, better quality of life and a diversity of positive social and economic outcomes.

The European Network on Mental Health Promotion recommends raising awareness of the importance of children’s mental health and developing policies to promote mental health and well-being of children and families by:

• Supporting parenthood, responsible and sensitive parenting and facilitating parent/child relationship development.

• Paying particular attention to vulnerable children, such as
  - children with health or psycho-social vulnerabilities (e.g. premature, disabled or chronically ill children, children with developmental or early behavioural problems);
  - children within a vulnerable family environment (e.g. abused or neglected children; children of single or teenage parents; adoptive/foster children; conflictive families; children from mentally ill or addicted parents);
  - and children with socio-cultural vulnerabilities (refugees, immigrants, unemployed parents).

• Supporting safe, child-friendly, non-violent and supportive neighbourhood environments that promote and protect mental health in children.

• Developing day care and nursery schools focusing on promoting the mental health in children.

• Facilitating schools to provide mental health promoting environments, curricula and programmes.

• Increasing the recognition of the needs of children within health and community services (e.g. primary health care, general practitioners, hospitals and other health services, libraries, playgrounds, etc) aiming at preventive and early intervention as well as education and social support for children and families.

2 Article 13 of the Treaty on the European Communities, Amsterdam June 1997
3 Megapoles – Public Health Network for Capital Cities/Regions, contact person: Kerstin Tode, Unit of Social Medicine, Stockholm County Council, Norrbacka, SE – 17176 Stockholm, Tel: +46-8-51 77 79 43, Fax: +46-8-33 46 93, E-mail: kerstin.tode@socmed.sll.se
4 European Network on Health Promoting Schools, Vivian Barnekow Rasmussen, Technical Secretariat, European Network of Health Promoting Schools, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 8 Scherfigsvej, DK – 2100 Copenhagen, Tel: +45-39 171 235, Fax: +45-39-171 818, E-mail: bdm@who.dk
- Encouraging workplaces to provide an environment which promotes the mental health of parents and supports family life.\(^5\)

- Enhancing and monitoring the child care and protection legal framework to facilitate and ensure mental health promotion and protection for children.

- In order to implement and consolidate these Recommendations, it is vital to provide special funding to support the development, implementation and maintenance of effective and cost-effective initiatives to promote mental health and well-being of children and families in different settings, and to support research, training, development of guidelines and knowledge transfer.

---

\(^5\) European Network of Workplace Health Promotion, Karl Kuhn, Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BauA), Freidrich Henkel Weg 1-25, D – 44149 Dortmund, Tel : +49-231-9071 243/242, Fax :+49-231-9071 454, E-mail : baua@baua2.do.shuttle.de
This report was produced by a contractor for Health & Consumer Protection Directorate General and represents the views of the contractor or author. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and do not necessarily represent the view of the Commission or the Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.