



Peer Review on “Furthering quality and accessibility of Foster Care service”

Peer Country Comments Paper - Italy

**The Italian Path in Family Foster Care.
A comparison with the Croatian overview**

Online, 20-21 May 2021

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Written by Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies/Istituto degli
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1 Introduction

This paper has been prepared for the Peer Review on "Furthering quality and accessibility of Foster Care service". It provides a comparative assessment of the policy example of the Host Country and the situation in Italy. For information on the Host Country policy example, please refer to the Host Country Discussion Paper.

2 Situation in Italy

Foster care is governed by **Law no.184 of 1983**, as amended by **Law no.149 of 2001**. The law protects children when the family environment in which they live is temporarily unsuitable. This is the case when the parents or the parent are no longer able to fulfil their parental role despite the support and assistance provided by the central state and the local authorities.

Law no.184 of 1983 represented a turning point with regard to children's right to have a family. It reformed the institution of adoption and changed the previous laws addressed to children with no family or living in vulnerable family situations.

Recreating a suitable family-type environment to ensure their well-being is the core of the deinstitutionalisation process that culminates in Article 2 of Law no.149 of 2001, which established the closure of institutions for minors (orphanages).

Law no.184 has been further amended by **Law no.173 of 2015**, which strengthens the children's right to a family. It also recognises the right to emotional continuity of children in foster care, highlighting the central role of foster families in helping families of origin and children overcome problems, and establishing the right of foster families to maintain emotional continuity with the child even after foster care ends.

It is important to underline that each foster care process must be designed and, consequently, implemented according to the specificities of the history of each child removed from his/her family of origin. Art. 2 of Law n. 184 establishes that the child shall be entrusted to a family, preferably with children under the age of 18, or to a single person, capable of ensuring subsistence, education, guidance and emotional connections that the child needs.

More recently, **Law no.205/2017**, 'State budget for the financial year 2018 and multiannual budget for the three-year period 2018-2020' set a reserve on poverty fund for care leavers. The Care Leavers Fund is addressed to adolescents that live out-of-home, due to a legal measure, when they become major of age. The Fund supports young boys and girls who leave residential services or foster care and are unable to go back to their families of origin. The aim is to help them reach real autonomy, continue their studies or vocational training or enter the job market with institutional and financial support for at least the first three years¹.

2.1 The national programme 'A path in foster care' and the 'Guidelines for Family Foster Care'

In 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy promoted the national programme '**A path in foster care**', which involved all the main actors of foster care: institutional level (e.g., Ministries, National Coordination of Foster Care Services, the Conference of Regions and Autonomous Provinces, the National Association of Municipalities), social workers and the third sector. The main objective of the programme was to increase the availability of families and communities towards foster care, building and reinforcing care services supporting families and children during the experience. The programme implemented a national mapping of foster care, covered training and support of foster families, promoted exchange of experiences and a national promotional campaign.

¹ For more information on Care Leavers project, run by Ministry of Labour and Social Policies starting from 2018:
<http://poninclusionelavoro.gov.it/areaintervento/lottaallapovera/Pagine/Care-Leavers.aspx>

Besides national legislation, a process of soft law has developed in Italy, in order to guarantee uniformity of treatment throughout the national territory. Following the regionalisation of social policy competencies, the state's competence is limited to the definition of the essential levels of services concerning civil and social rights and the drafting of guidance and coordination documents, such as national guidelines. The process is enabled by the constant and successful exchanges with all the institutional stakeholders and the support and suggestions of the non-institutional ones.

This cooperation has led to a multi-stakeholder approach to foster care right from the planning phase of the interventions. It also ensures constant monitoring and a final evaluation on the efficacy of the foster care process.

To ensure this shared governance and in accordance with the open method of coordination, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies organises on a regular basis National Coordination Tables with regional and municipal representatives, aimed at defining action priorities and operational projects.

An important result of the multi-year commitment started with the national programme 'A path in foster care' has been the systematisation of interventions addressed to children outside the family of origin, through the publication of the '**Guidelines for Family Foster Care**'², adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and approved by the Unified State-Regions Conference³ on 25th October 2012. The guidelines cover topics such as the different kinds of foster care, the organisation of the services, the planning and regulation, the relationship with the judicial authority, the local best practices and the operative tools.

Starting from 2014, the '**Guidebook for Operators and Families**' accompanies the Guidelines as a tool for the national orientation of practices and for cultural, political, organisational and training support. It is mainly addressed to foster care operators and families. Its objective is to suggest approaches and operational procedures to social workers, making the principles and recommendations set forth in the Guidelines more effective.

The Ministry of Labour and social policies adopted also the '**Guidelines for the assistance in residential services for minors**'⁴, approved by the Unified State-Regions Conference on the 14th December 2017. These guidelines are an updated tool for technical and political orientation in the field of residential services for children and adolescents. They develop a multidimensional approach for care in residential services and so-called so-called 'family-like' residential childcare.

Lastly, the Unified State-Regions Conference approved the '**Guidelines for intervention with children and families in vulnerable condition**'⁵ on 21st December 2017. The guidelines are based on the experience of the multiannual Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalisation (*Programma di Intervento per la Prevenzione dell'Istituzionalizzazione - P.I.P.P.I.*). Their aim is to draw up an operational tool able to coordinate models of interventions and widen the opportunities to help children that live in a vulnerable family environment. They cover

² The "Guidelines for Family Foster Care" are available at the following link:

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-sostegno-alle-famiglie-vulnerabili-per-la-tutela-dei-bambini-e-dei-ragazzi.aspx>

³ Legislative Decree 28 August 1997, no. 281, which also defined its composition, tasks and organisational and operational procedures (articles 8 and 9), established the Unified State Regions Conference. The Unified Conference works to develop cooperation between the activities of the State and the system of autonomies and to examine matters and tasks of common interest.

It is the main forum for discussion and coordination between the prerogatives of the state and those of regional authorities. Government representatives and regional presidents attend the meetings, sometimes supported by qualified experts. For more information: <http://www.statoregioni.it/it/>

⁴ The "Guidelines for the assistance in residential services for minors" are available at the following link: <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-sostegno-alle-famiglie-vulnerabili-per-la-tutela-dei-bambini-e-dei-ragazzi.aspx>

⁵ The "Guidelines for intervention with children and families in vulnerable condition" are available at the following link: <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-sostegno-alle-famiglie-vulnerabili-per-la-tutela-dei-bambini-e-dei-ragazzi.aspx>

topics such as interventions for the care and the protection of children inside their family environment, focusing on all the interventions aimed to prevent child removal from parents' care.

In Italy, as said before, regions are in charge of social services, while the central government has retained the responsibility for defining the basic levels of services concerning civil and social rights. The competence for the organisation and application of family foster care lies with the individual regions and autonomous provinces⁶.

Regions and autonomous provinces plan interventions for the well-being of children in the social and health sectors and manage all the services for foster care families. They establish budgets, professional figures required, types of foster families, forms of support to foster families, etc.

The local social services of the municipalities are in charge of foster care, in agreement and cooperation with the local health agencies and with associations, non-profit organisations, foster families and family networks. It is the municipality's task to plan the organisation of the social service according to the local needs and in accordance with regional laws. Therefore, the local social services have the duty to arrange family foster care, after having assessed the best interest of the child. They guarantee management and monitoring of foster care. Local authorities promote the establishment of the 'Family Foster Care Centres' as part of the local system of services that maintains competence over families of origin and the specific needs of children.

Municipalities identify skilled professionals who cooperate with the family foster care service. They also are responsible for

- establishing the procedures of family foster care and the organisational arrangements;
- providing adequate professional and economic support to foster families during the foster care period; and
- helping and supporting foster children and foster families in accessing all municipal services.

3 Assessment of the policy measure

Firstly, it is relevant to note that the 'Guidelines for Family Foster Care' standardise characteristics and requirements of foster families at the national level.

In Italy, family foster care can be:

- **Inter-familial** when children are placed with relatives up to the fourth degree of kinship. Previous control of their availability and suitability for the well-being of the child are undertaken before the placement;
- **Hetero-familial** when children are placed with families or individuals who are not included in the previous point.
- From a legal point of view, foster care can be implemented under two cases:
- **Consensual fostering.** It is decided by local social services with the consent of parents⁷ or of the legal guardian, after hearing the child who has reached the age of 12 or even younger if capable of understanding the situation;
- **Judicial custody:** It is ordered by the Juvenile Court upon the proposal of social services, when the consent of parents or parent exercising responsibility is absent. This measure limits parental responsibility and entrusts social services to support and control the custody of the child. The measure ordered by the court must indicate the estimated duration of the fostering care, that

⁶ As stated by Law no. 328 of 2000 on the realisation of the integrated system of interventions and social services.

⁷ or a parent exercising responsibility.

may not exceed two years. However, it can be extended by the Juvenile Court if the suspension of foster care affects negatively the child.

- Italy also provides types of family foster care **for children in special situations**:
- **Family foster care for young children (0-24 months)**: it has a short duration, covering just the time necessary for social workers to carry out the assessment of parental skills and for the Judicial Authority to decide on the future of the child (return to the family, family foster care, adoption);
- **Family foster care in emergency situations**: it provides a foster family to all those children, especially aged from 0 to 10, involved in emergency and dangerous situations that require 'prompt intervention';
- **Family foster care for adolescents**: taking care even beyond the age of 18, in view of the complex path towards independence, during which it is essential to build fundamental family attachments;
- **Family foster care in particularly complex situations**: children with complex and special needs (disabilities, psychiatric disorders, health problems), for whom a specific availability on the part of the foster carers is required, as well as targeted support interventions;
- **Family foster care for unaccompanied foreign minors**: to be activated with a specific project that takes into account the context, the actors and the migratory plans of the minor.
- Other forms of family care include:
- **Parent-child foster care**: addressed both to the parent and the child (or even to the whole family); in order to maintain the unity of the family, strengthening parental skills and promoting the development of social skills towards a path of growth and autonomy;
- **Placement into a foster family belonging to a network of families**: the foster family is clearly identified and joins a network of aggregated families, organised in association, which are structured to foster mutual support and help, both relational and material;
- **Professional foster care**: in case of particularly challenging family foster care, a member of the family becomes professional partner with specific duties in all phases of the management and monitoring of the foster care, the support of a tutor - with pedagogical competence - is foreseen, and the foster care must be of short duration.

To become foster parents there are no a priori constraints (i.e. it is not necessary to be married or in a couple), nor is it necessary to meet specific objective requirements (e.g. age, education, income). Therefore, families, preferably with underage children, as well as individuals can become foster parents, following an evaluation of their suitability by the Social Services. Foster parents must ensure the subsistence, education, guidance and care of the emotional relations of the child in foster care, providing for his/her needs in agreement with his/her family and social workers. Foster families are entitled, according to Law no.184/83, to the same support interventions and social benefits provided for biological families. These include economic support (i.e. monthly contribution for the family and insurance coverage for the minor), the receipt of family allowances and social security benefits for the minor, tax deductions for family burdens. Working foster parents have access to all the benefits in terms of compulsory and optional abstention from work, sick leave and daily rest periods provided for biological parents (e.g. maternity and paternity leave, parental leave, flexible working hours, access to Law no. 104/92 for assistance, social integration and rights of persons with disabilities).

It is important that foster families respect and accept the family of origin, maintaining positive relations with it and promoting the child's return to his/her family.

The role of the family of origin remains central throughout the foster care process; an indicator of success of the foster care project is the involvement of the family of origin and the recovery of the relationship with the child. As far as this aspect is concerned, we do not recall any information about it in the Croatian situation.

It is relevant to underline that active participation of children in family custody proceedings has been enhanced through the institution of 'hearings', which have become mandatory for minors aged 12 years or older, or even younger if capable of understanding, according to Legislative Decree no.154/2013. The active participation of children in the processes that concern their future is a key point in Italian foster care policies; their views must always be taken into account and decisions concerning removal from the family of origin must be explained and shared with the child, according to his/her age. We do not find in the Croatian report any mention of the active participation of children in the processes that involve their situation.

Although foreseen in Italy, professional fostering has not developed much, remaining residual, often managed by third-sector associations, of short duration and directed to very young children.

Children with disabilities and behavioural difficulties are placed in 'standard' foster families, with the activation of support and educational services specific to the child's condition. This is possible in Italy thanks to the presence of a cultural and civic organisations that are specialised in working with children with disabilities. Being part of a supporting network is essential for the foster family and represents a success factor for these policies in Italy. One of the challenges facing Italy nowadays is the increase in the number of children with *Disturbi Specifici dell'Apprendimento - DSA* (learning disorders) and cognitive disorders such as autism.

It is significant, as in Croatia, that the process of deinstitutionalisation has favoured family foster care, the professionalisation of interventions and the training of social workers, as well as support for the creation of public and private networks.

Unlike Croatia, Italy provides foster care in emergency situations. Moreover, the juvenile court plays a central role in the regular monitoring of the well-being of foster children. This aspect does not seem to be sufficiently developed in the Croatian Paper.

The importance of the individualised project is emphasised in both countries; in Italy, it is guided by the principle of the adequacy of intervention for children and families, which includes support to families of origin, foster care or community placement. Due to the regionalisation of competencies in the field of social policies, Italy does not have a national register of foster families comparable to the one described by the Host Country Paper. Instead, there are information systems at the regional level. In all regions that have at least one Foster Care Centre, there is a digital database of families available for foster care and/or family fostering. Additionally, every five years, the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the *Istituto degli Innocenti*, carries out a sample survey on foster care services, families and children. This survey is an essential working tool for mapping the needs of the territories.

The annual monitoring carried out with the collaboration of the regions and autonomous provinces provides data for the year 2018, which indicate a phase of standstill in the phenomenon of family foster care for individuals, families and relatives. A comparable situation is also found in the report of Croatia.

The figure for 2018 certifies the presence of 13,632 children and young people under the age of 18 in family foster care, a value that represents 1.4 per thousand of the juvenile population residing in Italy. There is a slight prevalence of hetero-familial foster care (57%) compared to intra-familial foster care (43%).

The judicial foster care prevails, accounting for four foster care placements out of five. Foster care should be a short to medium term intervention; it is difficult to establish the average duration in Italy, it certainly exceeds the recommended period in many cases. At the end of these long periods of foster care, children and adolescents mostly return to their families of origin. A disaggregated analysis from a territorial point of view reveals significant regional differences in the spread of the phenomenon of foster

care, not only linked to nord/south divide but also to issues linked to specific regions; a comparable pattern can be seen in the different territorial distribution of foster families in Croatia.

As regards the age of children, the distribution in the various territories confirms the substantial prevalence of pre-adolescents and adolescents, with a significant presence of children close to eighteen years of age.

This raises the question of the adequate accompaniment towards autonomy before leaving foster care. Italy has developed since 2018 the Care Leavers Project, focused on accompanying care leavers towards autonomy.

There seems to be a point of difference concerning the policies implemented in Croatia, which do not highlight this aspect in a significant manner, except for the support given by social services, Centre and NGOs, which seems, however, not sufficiently systemised.

4 Assessment of success factors and transferability

The main challenge for the transferability of Croatian policies lies in the regionalisation of competencies with regard to social policies in Italy. The central government maintains an exclusive power of direction and guidance, carried out by issuing guidelines to standardise interventions at the national level.

This is a big difference from Croatia and implies a difficulty in implementing centrally-designed social policies and making them effective at the regional and local level.

Another aspect to be considered concerns the difficulty of transferring good practices and actions conceived and developed in coherence with the social characteristics of a given territory; the heterogeneity of the social and economic conditions of the Italian regions means that any public policy must be adapted to the context and transformed accordingly.

That said, in view of the prevalence of family-based placement in both Croatia and Italy, it is easier to export success factors and adapt good practices that have demonstrated effectiveness and efficacy in terms of both action and results.

A successful experience of Croatia is building networks among foster families, also through the creation and support of associations. In Italy, there is an established tradition of family solidarity and associations and identification of shared intervention models thanks to the national guidelines, but surely, a better knowledge of Croatian best practices in this field could be useful.

The Croatian National Register of Foster Families is a good practice to share, as well as the actions put in place to inform and increase the number of families willing to foster on the national territory. It is important to open a shared reflection on this critical issue.

Another success factor that could be transferred is the development of an effective partnership between public and private social organisations to strengthen primary families and foster families. It is relevant to support cross-sectoral cooperation to improve childcare and family support systems overall.

Finally, it should be noted, as also pointed out in the Croatian paper, that the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down or even stopped social practices and forced an overall readjustment of the system, making it even more difficult to think about the transferability of successful actions.

5 Questions

- Clarification on any possible involvement of the juvenile court in the foster care decision and the monitoring of the foster care pathway; we do not recall any information about this aspect in the Croatian report
- What are the role and involvement, if any, of the family of origin in the child's family foster care pathway?

- Foster families in Croatia have access to the same support intervention and social benefits as in Italy? If not, do they have access to any social benefits or support intervention?
- How to find and involve foster families, especially with respect to children with special needs;
- More information on the active participation of children in every phase of the processes involving their future and if Croatia previews an institution similar to the Italian institution of "hearing".

6 List of references

This report is the result of an open discussion with representatives of the **National Foster Care Services Coordination (CNSA)**, held online on April 16, 2021. The CNSA, formally constituted in 1998 by an agreement between several public administrations, is the body that, on a national level, offers opportunities for discussion on family foster care to managers and operators of Social and Health Services. Up to now, 65 bodies and institutions (Municipalities, Provinces, Regions and Local Health Authorities) have joined the Cnsa.

The "*Guidelines for Family Foster Care*", the "*Guidelines for the assistance in residential services for minors*" and the "*Guidelines for intervention with children and families in vulnerable condition*" are available at the following link:

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-sostegno-alle-famiglie-vulnerabili-per-la-tutela-dei-bambini-e-dei-ragazzi.aspx>

For more information on Care Leavers project:

<http://poniinclusione.lavoro.gov.it/areeintervento/lottaallapoverta/Pagine/Care-Leavers.aspx>

Normative appendix

Law no. 184 of 4 May 1983 regulating the adoption and foster care of minors.

Law no. 176 of 27 May 1991, Ratifying and implementing the New York Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989.

Law no. 476 of December 31, 1998, Ratification and implementation of the Convention for the protection of minors and cooperation in the matter of international adoption, done at The Hague on May 29, 1993. Amendments to Law no. 184 of May 4, 1983, on the subject of adoption of foreign minors.

Legislative Decree no. 112 of March 31, 1998, Transfer of administrative functions and tasks from the State to the regions and local authorities, in implementation of chapter I of Law no. 59 of March 15, 1997 - See articles 131-132.

Legislative Decree 18 August 2000, n. 267, consolidated text of laws on the organisation of local authorities.

Law 08 November 2000 n. 328, Framework law for the realisation of the integrated system of interventions and social services.

Law n. 149 of March 28, 2001, Amendments to Law n. 184 of May 4, 1983, concerning "Regulations on adoption and foster care of minors", as well as to Title VIII of Book 1 of the Civil Code.

Law no. 219 of December 10, 2012, Provisions on the recognition of natural children.

Legislative Decree no. 154 of 28 December 2013, Revision of the provisions in force on filiation, pursuant to article 2 of Law no. 219 of 10 December 2012.

Law No. 173 of October 19, 2015, Amendments to Law No. 184 of May 4, 1983, on the right to emotional continuity of children in family foster care.

Law No. 101 of June 18, 2015, Ratification and implementation of the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, The Hague, October 19, 1996.

Law April 7, 2017, No. 47, Provisions on measures for the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors.

Law n. 205, 2017 "State budget for the financial year 2018 and multi-annual budget for the three-year period 2018-2020"

Law January 11, 2018, No. 4, Amendments to the Civil Code, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions in favour of orphans for domestic crimes.

Law July 29, 2020, No. 107, Establishment of a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the activities related to family-type communities that receive minors. Provisions on the right of the child to a family.

Annex 1 Summary table

The main points covered by the paper are summarised below.

Situation in the peer country

- **Law no. 184 of 1983**, as amended by Law no. 149 of 2001, protects children when the family environment in which they live is temporarily unsuitable namely when parents or the single-parent are no longer able to fulfil their parental role despite the support and assistance provided by the central state and the local authorities.
- The core of the deinstitutionalisation process lies in Article 2 of **Law no. 149 of 2001**, which establishes the closure of institutions for minors and the importance to recreate a suitable family-type environment for children in foster care.
- An important soft law result has been the systematisation of interventions addressed to children outside the family of origin, through the publication of the '**Guidelines for Family Foster Care**', adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and approved by the Unified State-Regions Conference on 25th October 2012.
- Starting from 2014, the '**Guidebook for Operators and Families**' accompanies the Guidelines as a tool of 'connection' and cultural, political, organisational and training support. The aim is to suggest work tracks and operational procedures to social workers, making the principles and recommendations set forth in the Guidelines effective.
- The competence for the organisation and application of family foster care lies with the individual regions and autonomous provinces, as provided by **Law no. 328 of 2000** on the realisation of the integrated system of interventions and social services.

Assessment of the policy measure

- In Croatia, as in Italy, **the process of deinstitutionalisation has favoured family foster care**, the professionalisation of interventions and the training of social workers, as well as support for the creation of public and private networks.
- The two countries don't share the same **prerequisites to become foster parents**; professional foster care is not widespread in Italy, unlike Croatia. Children with disabilities and behavioural difficulties are placed in 'standard' foster families, with the activation of support and educational services specific to the child's condition. We could not find sufficient information on the support interventions and social benefits addressed to foster parents in Croatia.
- The **role of the family of origin** remains central in Italy; an indicator of the success of the foster care project is the involvement of the family of origin and the recovery of the relationship with the child. This aspect doesn't seem dealt with in the Croatian report.
- The **active participation of children** in the processes that concern their future is a key point in Italian foster care policies; their views must always be taken into account and decisions concerning removal from the family of origin must be explained and shared with the child, according to his/her age. There is no mention of the active participation of children in the Croatian report.
- Italy does not have a **national register of foster families**, comparable to the one described by Croatia. Instead, there are information systems at the regional level.

Assessment of success factors and transferability

- The main challenge for the transferability of Croatian policies lies in the **regionalisation of competencies** with regard to social policies in Italy. This is a big difference with Croatia and implies a difficulty in implementing centrally designed social policies and making them effective at the regional and local level.
- It is difficult to transfer good practices and actions conceived and developed in coherence with **the social characteristics of a given territory**, also due to the heterogeneity of the social and economic conditions of the Italian regions.
- In Italy, there is a tradition of family solidarity and associations and the identification of shared intervention models thanks to the national guidelines, but a better knowledge of Croatian best practices in the **building of networks among foster families** could be useful.
- The **Croatian National Register of Foster Families** is a good practice to share, as well as the actions put in place to inform and increase the number of families willing to foster on the national territory.
- Another success factor that could be shared is the development of an **effective partnership between public and private social organisations**, to strengthen primary families and foster families. It is relevant to support cross-sectoral cooperation to improve childcare and family support systems overall.

Questions

- Does the juvenile court have any involvement in the foster care decision and monitoring the foster care pathway?
- What are the role and involvement, if any, of the family of origin in the child's family foster care pathway?
- Do foster families in Croatia have access to the same support and social benefits as in Italy? If not, do they have access to any social benefits or support?
- How to find and involve foster families, especially with respect to children with special needs;
- Is there any information on the active participation of children in every phase of the processes involving their future? Does Croatia preview an institution similar to the Italian institution of "hearing"?

Annex 2 Example of relevant practice

Name of the practice:	<i>New words for family foster care.</i> <i>The Handbook for Operators and Families</i>
Year of implementation:	2014
Coordinating authority:	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and University of Padova
Objectives:	It is an operational guide, a sort of vademecum to be used by the many professionals of the Fostering Centres and by social workers (social, health, justice, school) and also by families and foster carers, in order to frame in a clear and exhaustive way, the core issues identified in the Guidelines for Family Foster Care.
Main activities:	The text consists of a reasoned selection of work tools, paths, experiences and dissemination materials that develop and deepen the principles and recommendations expressed in the National Guidelines.
Results so far:	The handbook has contributed to the dissemination and enhancement of the documents produced between 2009 and 2011 in the National Project A Path in Foster Care. The handbook is based on the findings of that project. It is used as an operational tool by social workers throughout the country.

Name of the practice:	<i>Newborn Project</i>
Year of implementation:	Since 2001 and still operational
Coordinating authority:	Municipality of Turin
Objectives:	It is a service that deals with the family fostering of very young children, 0 - 24 months, for a short period of time, possibly less than one year, and allows to avoid long stays in hospital or a community for children who are in a situation of high uncertainty about their future and stable placement. These are children who are recognised by their parents but, for different reasons, the Juvenile Court determined that they must be temporarily placed in foster care.
Main activities:	The main activities include the evaluation of parenting skills and their resilience, the evaluation of any other parental figures suitable for the child. The services are committed to supporting and evaluating parental skills as well as verifying the adherence to a recovery process and the sustainability of this process over time. As a result, the judicial authorities obtain the relevant information to make a decision about the future of that child in the shortest possible time, namely: returning them to their parents, placing them into their extended family or long-term foster care, starting the adoption process.

Results so far:	From 2001 to the present day, the number of newborns placed in foster care through this service has grown constantly. Due to the positive experience, many foster families of the Newborn Project have repeatedly offered to take in more children at different times.



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