

# Recommendations for out-of-family care support

**Project “Improving the accessibility and efficiency of social support services for guardians and foster and adoptive parents to strengthen their ability to protect and nurture children at risk”**

Nr. LLI-405 / Lat-Lit SOS FGA

**Project call:** 2nd call of cross border cooperation programme “Interreg V-A Latvian – Lithuanian programme 2014 – 2020”

**Project partners:** SOS Children’s Villages Latvia and SOS Children’s Villages Lithuania

**Project Duration:** 01.06.2018 - 31.12.2019

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The project aims at better social inclusion of socially deprived and vulnerable children with behavioural, emotional and developmental issues who are in care of guardians and adoptive and foster parents. The direct beneficiaries ~200 existing and potential foster, guardian and adoptive families living in 5 municipalities – Bauska, Rundāle, Iecava, Vecumnieki and Šauliai from two neighbouring regions: Zemgale (LV) and Šauliai (LT).

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**Bauska, 2019**

## Recommendations for out-of-family care support

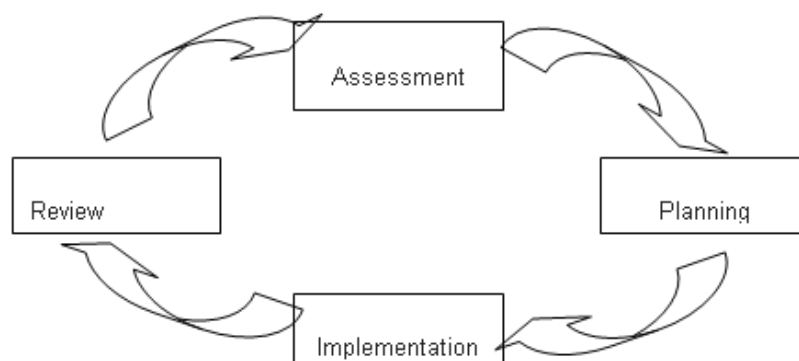
Recommendations are developed according to cross border cooperation programme “*Interreg V-A Latvian – Lithuanian programme 2014 – 2020*” project Nr. LLI-405 “**Improving the accessibility and efficiency of social support services for guardians and foster and adoptive parents to strengthen their ability to protect and nurture children at risk**” (Lat-Lit SOS FGA project) requirements.

The main purpose of this document is to give recommendations for foster families, guardians and adoptive parents support to help them with their duties and ensuring the safety and well-being of children. During the project, Child’s Individual Development Plan (CIDP) and a Foster Family (Guardian/Adoptive Family) Development Plan (FFDP) were developed. These documents provide information on the structure, purpose, and need for improvement of the established plans, as well as recommendations for out-of-family care support.

### Assessment: definition and purpose

Assessment is a systematic process of gathering a range of information relating to a child and caregiver, to help identify their strengths and needs, in order to decide on appropriate further action or to confirm that no additional help is required. The information should be gathered from a wide range of sources, in order for it to be as objective as possible and to provide insight into caregiver resources, difficulties and the child's future development.

Assessment is a part of a cycle. The assessment must inform planning, the plan must then be implemented, the implementation must then be reviewed, which may lead to further assessment.



### **The purpose of assessment is:**

- to gather information,
- to identify strengths,
- to identify needs,
- to inform action.

### **Competence-based Foster Family's Development Plan (see Attachment No1)**

The FFDP developed during the project is based on five competencies:

- *Protecting and nurturing children;*
- *Meeting child's developmental needs and addressing their delays;*
- *Supporting relationships with birth families;*
- *Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime (permanency); and*
- *Working as a member of a professional team.*

The plan consists of evaluating the competences of the caregivers based on specific skills and needs, thus assessing whether any of the competencies needs to be improved. There are two parts to this plan - the assessment section, which describes the needs and resources, and the plan, which is already a concrete plan to support the child with the specific needs and who is responsible for it. A review of the part of the plan is agreed with the caregiver and what is done and the results are evaluated. The plan can be improved and changed as needed.

These competences are the basis of PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education) programme used to prepare and educate families that are interested in providing foster care or in becoming adoptive homes for children in the foster care system. In Latvian foster parent regulations these competences are mentioned as a basis for training new foster parents and adoptive parents.

### **Child's Individual Development Plan (see Attachment No2)**

The Child's Individual Development Plan (further – CIDP) developed within the project is based on the UK *common assessment system* (in English - *the common assessment framework (CAF)*), that is standardized approach to assessing children and

their families to facilitate early identification of additional needs and services. This assessment system is based on research, theory and practice for ensuring child's welfare. To understand and use such an assessment system requires knowledge of child's development, attachment theory, a systemic approach and parenting approaches. It is desirable for various involved parties participate in development of the plan as well as to be able to evaluate the specific steps of the plan to meet needs and achieve the objective.

This plan also has two parts: an evaluation section which describes needs and resources, and a part of the plan which is already a concrete plan: how to support the child's specific needs and who is responsible for that. The review of the plan is agreed with the caregiver and what is done and results are evaluated. The plan can be improved and changed grounding on needs.

### **Basic principles of the CIDP:**

- Focus on a child;
- Based on child's development;
- Ensures equal opportunities;
- Collaboration with the child and his/her care family is required;
- Emphasize resources and identify needs;
- A continuous process, not a one-off event;
- Performed in parallel with provision of the service;
- Based on evidence-based knowledge.

## **Difficulties and suggestions**

### **- A new service and inter-institutional cooperation**

The out-of-family care support has been conditional so far and the service provided by this project, which is also provided by Out-of-Family Care Support Centres now, as for caregivers as for collaborating institutions is new. At the project beginning there was noticed an understandable restraint and mistrust to this type of services. It took several months and even a year for the caregivers to be able to trust and talk about difficulties they are facing, thus enabling project professionals to help them to solve these difficulties.

Initially, the collaboration institutions, like Social Departments and Custody Courts, were not ready for such a service. It is still essential to strengthen cooperation between Custody Courts, Social Departments and other supporters by clarifying responsibilities, bounds of each institution promoting inter-institutional cooperation on specific issues.

Caregivers' cooperation has mainly been with the Custody Court by now, that has had a supervisory role, so caregivers naturally have avoided meetings and been afraid to share their difficulties. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen caregiver's cooperation with the Support Centre, the Custody Court and authorities ensuring services in accordance with their functions.

#### **- Special attention to guardians**

Guardians as caregivers have not received necessary support and attention for a long time in difficulties they often face. During the project it has been observed that guardians are mainly people with insufficient skills and knowledge about needs of a child and these people are not tended to ask for a help or talk about their difficulties. When the guardians became aware of the project support and began dealing with their difficulties, the guardians gladly attended consultations of different professionals that were not available before due to financial reasons as well as lack of awareness and faith that anyone could help. The most frequently used specialists consultations were: psychologist, children's psychiatrist, physiotherapist, children's neurologist, sports classes, etc.

This observation demonstrates the need for special support for guardians as well as for assessment of the guardians' skills in the upbringing of a particular child. In this context it is worth to raise financial resources to provide specialists' advice and ensure training for guardians that is not currently offered by the state-paid basket at the Out-of-Family Care Support Centres.

#### **- FFDP and CIDP**

Evaluation and planning are an integral part of the support process. The plans developed and used during the project are based on needs and competences however, it is necessary to improve the plans may they would be less formal and may they provide a deeper insight into resources and needs of out-of-family care

providers. The plans should be monitored regularly, preferably once a year, to ensure efficiency of the plans and better results for identifying needs. Preparation and monitoring of plans should be done in collaboration with the family itself, preferably get the information from other sources thus providing more objective picture of the needed support in individual case.

Meanwhile in 2018, the government developed and adopted regulations for foster families including individual development plans and methodological model. As this service is new, work on these methodological materials will be continued.

- **“PRIDE for Parents” training course**

During the project the basic *PRIDE for Parents* training course was organised in Bauska, Iecava and Vecumnieki Counties. In addition the knowledge development modules of the *PRIDE for Parents* programme were organised on following topics: “Disciplining with the aim to protect, care for and meet development needs”, “Development issues related to sexuality”, “Signs and symptoms of sexual violence”, “Development of teenagers”, “Adolescent care: encouraging attraction”, “How to help young people to improve their learning achievements”.

All the trainings were highly appreciated by caregivers and also specialists who practically work with caregivers and in whose work the new knowledge for caregivers was a great contribution for problem solving. The training provided a deepened insight into children’s emotions and behaviour which is the most important challenge for caregivers.

In Europe this programme was introduced in 1991 – first in the Netherlands and Belgium. Since then, the programme was introduced by following countries: Sweden (1992), Finland (1993), Hungary (1996), Norway (1997), Poland (2000), Estonia (2001), Russia (2002), Slovakia (2002), Island (2003), Ukraine (2004), Belorussia (2005), Serbia (2007), Lithuania (2008), Bulgaria (2011), Czech Republic (2013), Macedonia (2014). Now, when the programme is available in Latvia, it is important may this training programme is not only available to potential foster parents but also to existing foster parents, guardians and adoptive parents.

### - **Creative workshops for families and teenagers**

Within the project two creative three-day workshops were organised for foster families, guardians and adoptive families giving them opportunity to enjoy a variety of interesting activities, meet and get to know other families. It was an opportunity to visit different places in the local area and enjoy interesting excursions. Each day was spent on a theme related to time in nature.

Additionally to these workshops various creative days for teenagers during school holidays were organised. Only teenagers without their caregivers took a part in these events. These days were a great social skills training for teens, an opportunity to meet other peers, spend time productively and creatively, and enjoy different offered activities and trips.

The project funding made it possible to organise such events and as a result, to experience how important it is for caregivers and teenagers alike. The main advantages of organising such events for persons being in out-of-family care are: *reassure caregivers and adolescents that they are not alone; enable families to spend time together without planning but just going with the tide; ensure an opportunity to meet new people and make contacts; for adolescents – to learn social skills in a natural environment; give adolescents an impression of productive and valuable activities*

#### **Attachments:**

1. Foster Family Development Plan (FFDP) – on 5 pages;
2. Child's Individual Development Plan (CIDP) – on 6 pages.

ATTACHMENT No 1

## FOSTER FAMILY (GUARDIAN / ADOPTIVE PARENT) DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CAREGIVER(S) NAME, SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment period: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Protecting and nurturing children

**1.1. Ability to provide childcare and protection** (housing and living conditions, does the child have a private space to study according to child`s age and development; safety; food; clothing; hygiene etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**1.2. Health care provision** (suitable nutrition for the child, family doctor, necessary vaccines, dentist, eye doctor, physical health, mental health, allergies etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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### 2. Meeting children`s developmental needs and addressing developmental delays

**2.1. Child`s developmental needs** (education, interests, access to books, an adult interested in child's learning progress and achievements, takes into account the child's initial situation and special educational needs, leisure time etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**2.2. Understanding the child's age group characteristics, discipline** (caregiver knowledge and understanding of the child's age group characteristics and needs, appropriate and positive discipline strategies etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**2.3. Understanding the impact of traumatic experiences and loss on the development of a child**

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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### **3. Supporting relationships between children and their families**

**3.1. Understanding the importance of the relationship between the child and his/her biological family** (meetings with biological family, talking with the child about his/her biological family, the attitude of caregiver towards biological family etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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#### 4. Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime

**4.1. Relationship and emotional attachment with current caregivers** (refers to careful relationships that have a positive effect on the development of a child etc.)

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**4.2. Ability to work with other professionals involved in child care** (kindergarten, school, medical staff, family support centre etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**4.3. Child`s future development planning** (choice of study program, possibility to return to family of origin etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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#### 5. Working as a member of a professional team.

**5.1. Ability to work with professionals** (kindergarten, school, medical staff, psychologist, family support centre etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**5.2. Caregivers perspective of difficulties and needs:**

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**5.3. The caregiver's ability to improve** (understanding of needs, attending courses, seminars, support groups etc.):

**Strengths:**

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**Needs:**

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**CONCLUSIONS:**

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## FOSTER FAMILY (GUARDIAN/ADOPTIVE PARENT) DEVELOPMENT PLAN

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

№.	Date	Definition of problem	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible person	Timeframe	Success indicator, (date)
1							
2							
3							

Document prepared on \_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

Plan prepared by: Project worker \_\_\_\_\_ (position and specialist's name, surname)

**I \_\_\_\_\_ (name, surname of client) confirm that I have read and agree to comply to this plan.**

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_ (client signature)

***Document is made in two copies, each party receiving one signed copy***

ATTACHMENT No 2

**CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**CHILD'S NAME, SURNAME:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**EDUCATION INSTITUTION, CLASS:**

Assessment period: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSESSMENT: STRENGTHS AND NEEDS**

**I. Child's developmental needs (health, emotional development, behaviour, education, self-care skills)**

1.1. SUMMARY OF THE **HEALTH** ASSESSMENT:

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>CHILD'S/ YOUNG PERSON'S HEALTH</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

1.2. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF **EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**1.3. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION(COGNITIVE ABILITIES) – KINDERGARDEN, SCHOOLS, OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>COGNITIVE ABILITIES</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**1.4. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF SELFCARE SKILLS**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>SELFCARE SKILSS</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**II.CAREGIVER SKILLS (care, security, family relationships, emotional closeness)**

**2.1.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF CAREGIVER SKILLS**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>CAREGIVER SKILLS</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

2.2.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>SAFETY</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

2.3. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>RELATIONSHIP WITH CAREGIVER(S)</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

2.4.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**III.SOCIAL FACTORS (relationships with birth family, relationships with friends, living conditions)**

**3.1.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH FAMILY**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH FAMILY</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**3.2.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>

**3.3.SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF CHILD`S LIVING CONDITIONS**

	1. Good	2. Satisfactory	3. Some difficulties	4. Difficulties currently outweigh strengths
CURRENT SCORE ✓				

<b>CHILD`S LIVING CONDITIONS</b>
<b>NEEDS</b>



## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN

\_\_\_\_\_ (name, surname)

Date of birth:

Date of meeting:

Participates:

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE		1.				Control date			
		2.							Confirmation on objective fulfillment
SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES	Area <small>(physical health etc.)</small>	OBJECTIVES	TASKS How to achieve it?	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIMEFRAME By which time period should the goals be fulfilled?	SUCCESS INDICATOR How will the goals be measured?			

Date (from.....to.....)

Signatures:

Caregiver

Employee

Others participants

The next review date is:

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**INDIVIDUAL CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
AND PROGRESS REVIEW FORM**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Success assessment</b>	<b>Conclusions/Notes</b>