

Thirty Successful Experiences of Redistribution, Reduction,
Recognition, Remuneration and Representation in Care Work

Home-Start Worldwide, United Kingdom



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Country and/or location of implementation: United Kingdom and an additional 22 countries

Coverage includes Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, Czechia, and Romania (Europe); Canada (the Americas); Burundi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (Africa and the Middle East); Australia, Japan, and Sri Lanka (Asia Pacific).

Instances and/or legal framework responsible for its implementation: Home-Start Worldwide, a non-profit organization.

Specific issue covered and beneficiaries of the action or policy

Early childhood parenting and care can be a truly difficult task when support networks are not in place (García Ruiz et al., 2018). Regardless of the problems families face (isolation, difficulty coping with the demands of parenthood, stress, economic hardship, marital problems, domestic violence, ill health and disabilities, etc.), Home-Start volunteers supervised by professional staff (coordinators) offer an unbiased helping hand to ensure children have the best possible start in life (Worldwide, n.d.). The intervention consists of a free service to families with children under five years of age by volunteers with child care experience with a focus on providing support in early childhood care tasks. The program's objectives are: (a) to reduce the burden of care work, to reduce the stress involved in parenting, and to encourage families to create an environment conducive to the children's growth (special attention is given to families at risk of child abuse and neglect); and (b) to help parents grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children, and expand their ties to the community.

Participation in the program is voluntary. Therefore, it is up to the family to request assistance and accompaniment. In this way, they are assigned a volunteer from the local community who is trained and experienced, to make scheduled visits to the families once or twice a week and with a duration of 3 or 4 hours until the child turns five years old, or until the family decides to withdraw from the program. The support provided by the volunteers includes assistance with chores and household management, friendship, encouragement, emotional support, and teaching affectionate behavior with the children.

The program is run by community management committees at each site of operation. In most countries, Home-Start schemes are coordinated by a national association. The national associations provide first-level resources, training, and program support in their respective countries. Each national association tries to develop public and local government awareness for the families it serves. In some countries, national associations work with governments to try to improve family policies. Sometimes this means they must demand greater involvement from governments, promoting major changes where necessary.

Results expected from and obtained with the action or policy

Worldwide, 20,000 volunteers work with 40,000 registered families. Home-Start's work is evaluated by independent researchers and academics. The evidence shows the effectiveness of the program's approach in improving families' childcare and parenting skills, as well as improving families' sense of isolation, and security in their ability to manage problems, leading to the improved emotional and physical well-being of the children in the short and long-term, and improving the volunteers' lives. It highlights the recognition of the EU evidence-based best practice: the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC).

Funding comes from trusts, foundations, individual donations, and international organizations. Home-Start is a member of the Global Alliance to Prevent Violence against Children and Eurochild.

Justification of compliance with the inclusion criteria

This community initiative is a recognition and reduction of care work in the hands of families. Through volunteer programs, families can transfer a portion of early childhood care to this community-based organization.

For more information, visit homestartworldwide.org/