**Committee of Experts on Children and Families
(CS-EF)**

POSITIVE PARENTING IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

DRAFT REPORT TO THE CS-EF

INTRODUCTION

We have reached a dramatic point in the history of parenting and the family. As the decades roll by, the fabric of family life seems ever more affected by rapid and profound social change. The drama lies mainly in the fact that just as the demands on it are growing – whether from the media, the public authorities or family members themselves - the family is experiencing a reduction in the support available to it. It is not only material resources that are at issue – families are also affected by shortages in socio-emotional and time resources and there has also been a reduction in social support systems. On top of that, the task of parenting is historically unique: because of profound changes in norms and laws, adults are compelled to reinvent the meaning of partnership between man and woman and to forge a new path of leadership in relation to children and young people (Juul 2005). Hence, parents today need specific information, support and skills to enable them to fashion and realise their hopes for their own and their children's development. For this and other reasons, public policy cannot afford to lie idle on the matter of parenthood.

To a considerable extent the UNCRC changed the context within which parenting is carried out. It especially shifted the attention to children. Obviously this has implications for parenting and is an important part of the context of the present report.

The spirit of the report is enabling – focused on the resources and different kinds of 'capital' that are needed for parenting and the associated obligations and rights to realise such resources. This is what is meant by 'positive parenting'. Such rights and obligations are seen to pertain to a range of parties. In this report we wish to frame parenting in terms of a 'community' of key parties: parents, children, local and national service providers, the state. Each is obligated and (has to be) endowed with resources to fulfil these obligatons and realise the rights and responsibilities involved in parenting. The ultimate goal is to enhance the quality of children's lives, that of their parents and ultimately society itself. The specific objectives of the report are to:
- identify the main challenges facing all parents and give particular attention to parenting in difficult situations;
- identify what appear to be good responses to new situations and perspectives, in terms of both research and also policy and provision;
- elaborate guidelines on parenting and children's rights, of relevance to parents, professionals and service providers and states parties.

The Council of Europe has been at the forefront in developing understanding of childhood and family life as well as in working for the betterment of the lives of vulnerable and excluded groups and individuals. The Council recognises that the balance between children's rights and parental responsibility needs to be further developed. This report represents a continuation of the Council's activites in that regard.

A number of activities of the Council of Europe provide the immediate backdrop to this report. It is an initiative of the Committee of Experts on Children and Families (CS-EF) –

a committee set up in XXX with the mandate to "support parents in the best interests of the child". The CS-EF operates under the auspices of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS). This was set up following the Strasbourg Summit of 1997 and within the Council of Europe is the main body with responsibility for the field of children and families. The CDCS has promoted various activities relating to this field. Among the most noteworthy have been the Programme for Children, which ran from 1998 to 2000, and following that the establishment in 2001 of a Forum for Children and Families. This has met twice yearly since, acting as a focal point for questions relating to children and families in Europe. Children and violence has been a major theme in the recent work of the CDCS and the Council. Under the CS-EF, two working parties have been set up, one on parenting skills for preventing and combating violence against children and the second on parenting of children at risk of social exclusion. The activities of these two working groups are central to the current report which draws heavily from work undertaken by members of and consultants engaged to progress the activities of these two working groups.

Guiding Philosophy of the Report
This report departs from a number of first principles about parenting. First, parenting should be seen as a stage in the family process. It is therefore an activity that takes place within a specific family context and is imbued with the emotional and other ties that bind specific family members to each other. By seeing parenthood as a stage of family life we are also making reference to the fact that it is a transient period, one of a number of different phases in the lives of families as they mature and change. There is a related point to be made here and that is of parenthood as evolving – it changes as family life matures and as societies develop their thinking about parenting and family life more generally. The latter point underlines that there is a strong 'social' component to parenting. While it is in many respects private, as a set of relations and practices it is also shaped by society's understanding and expectations of appropriate parental behaviour and how the state constructs public policy.

A second principle underlying this report is that parenting is an activity that needs support. All parents experience known times and situations of high need: childbirth, bereavement and the stress occurring during the early years of marriage and parenthood. Above and beyond this, there are parents with additional need of support, perhaps because they are parenting alone, because they are raising their children on a low income, or because the family is having to cope with a health-related or other difficulty. The main implication of this is that the authorities must recognise parenting as a domain of public policy and provision. While this is a bigger step for some countries than others, all countries have to take some action.

A third principle underlying the Council of Europe approach is that there is no singular, correct way of parenting. Not alone does research endorse a range of approaches but life is so diverse nowadays that differences have to be accommodated. A plural approach is therefore recommended. While this departure point makes it more difficult to set guidelines, it is in line with the trend in the Council's approach to the family which has

been moving in the direction of an inclusive approach to what constitutes a family and who are family members.

Fourthly, while duties have been to the fore in much of the recent literature and rhetoric, the Council of Europe believes it is beneficial to change the spotlight. In particular, this report is especially concerned with improving the conditions of parenting so that parents and children can realise their rights and live up to their obligations. In other words, the social conditions of parenthood are seen to be central for realising rights and obligations.

Finally, this report is based on the understanding that parenting involves both parents and children. It is therefore concerned with the needs and rights of children as well as those of parents, fathers as well as mothers, and rests on an understanding that the complex of relationships involved is mutually reinforcing.

<u>Definitions and Scope</u>
The focus of the report is on parenting in contemporary European societies. Parenting is a concept developing at a time when the role of the family, the place of the child and population renewal are posing challenges to all European countries. It carries within it the idea that being a parent is not just a biological or social fact, but also the fruition of a psychological maturing process in the adults who have become parents.

It must be acknowledged that not all European languages deal with the concept of parenting in the same way. While English has two different words with 'parenthood' and 'parenting', and so also has French with *parenté* and *parentalité*, most countries do not have two separate signifiers, so they use a single word to denote both concepts e.g., "rodzicielstwo" in Polish (which also exists in Russian), or concepts such as 'the parental condition' and 'the parental function'. This report underlines that the relatively new term 'parenting' has a number of dimensions:
- the relationship dimension, in which parental love is integrated into social systems;
- the fundamental rational dimension, concerned with educational/child rearing values and objectives;
- the applied rational dimension, concerned with educational/child rearing acquisition and practices.

It is important to define parenting in a way that takes account of the physical and social environment, its background history and its relational, rational and applied dimensions. For the purposes of this report, parenting is the ongoing sets of relationships and activities that are involved for parents in caring for and raising children. This definition carries within it the idea that being a parent is not just a biological or social fact, but also the fruition of a psychological maturing process in the adults who have become parents. Parenting then involves a set of intellectual and emotional adjustments enabling adults to parent, i.e., to meet their children's needs in the physical, emotional, intellectual and social spheres.

This definition of parenting is used in the context of:

- recognition of the existence of diverse family configurations and family-related values;
- developments in children's right to benefit from a family upbringing irrespective of the social condition of the adults comprising the family;
- the continuation of family life as a model and a reference point, despite fundamental changes in the family.

The report is especially concerned with the quality of parenting and its intent is to provide the underlying evidence to support a set of guidelines, directed at states parties, oriented to improving the quality and conditions of parenting in European societies.

Methodology and Approach

The report uses documentary analysis as its methodology. The research on which the report is based was conducted through a review of documents relating to family law, family-related research reports, medical and psychological research reports. The sources consulted included specialist databases, research databases, bibliographic resources and government and international organisations' websites. The main base of the report was provided by a number of consultants, who are specialists in a range of areas and disciplines. These are identified by name at the beginning of each chapter. Their contribution is gratefully acknowleged.

The report consists of five main sections. The first focuses on the nature of parenthood, childhood and family life in today's Europe. It is intended to give an overview of the most up-todate thinking on and knowledge about parenting and the lives of children and how they are changing. Special attention is devoted to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, because that has changed the legal and in many ways institutional landscape within which parenting is set. The second chapter focuses on families in situations of particular need, especially those who are living on low income. The third chapter moves on to discuss and document the family policy measures and programmes and activities that have been put in place to support parents. Chapter Four considers violence against and the use of corporal punishment on children, documenting the move away from physical punishment of children and suggesting a range of alternative approaches. Chapter Five focuses on drug-related behaviour and its implications for parenting. A set of guidelines, prepared in a second stand-alone document, accompanies the report.

1.

TOWARDS A VISION OF PARENTING
IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD
(based on work by Nina Pećnik, Mary Daly and Christian Lalière)

Childhood and parenting are domains of social life about which strong morals and ideals prevail. These are contested, however, certainly across societies and usually within them as well. We must therefore acknowledge that the prevailing set of opinions about what constitutes good parenting or appropriate childhood experiences has a strong normative content. To put this another way, there is always an ideal model of parenting. When we look back a few decades, the family was depicted as a very self-contained and closed unit within the confines of the home environment. However, while some remnants of this model still prevail, the underlying consensus has broken down. As Campion (1995: 277) points out: "mass conformity to a single model of family life could only be maintained as long as the dominant culture could remain homogeneous and sealed from other ways of living". Such conditions no longer prevail. She also points out how the promotion of the goal of personal happiness and in particular the emphasis in developed societies on children's entitlement to happiness has profoundly affected our view of how parents should behave. The actual model of fit parenting that is now emerging from the flux of the past thirty years is a more open and fluid one with few clear-cut rules or boundaries (ibid: 280). While this is to be welcomed, it must also be pointed out that at least part of the appeal of the past was that there was consensus and relative consistency in prevailing views about what constituted good parenting. Everything seemed to be pulling in the same direction – the perceived needs of parents, children and society were all complementary whereas now the family world is filled with incongruity (ibid: 300/301). At least parents were not subject to conflicting demands which is a high risk nowadays.

Against a context of change, insecurity and variation, this chapter provides an overview of the latest thinking on parenting and childhood. While parenting and family life always evolve *in situ*, in the sense especially of being influenced by a country's cultural, social and economic fabric, there is a high degree of similarity in the challenges that European countries are facing today. Hence it makes sense to identify broad trends. The chapter has two objectives: to identify opinion from the latest research about parenthood and childhood and to relate it to the legal and policy context especially as influenced by the UNCRC. It should be pointed out that the fields of research on children and parenting are very active fields and, in addition, that there are many contesting views of appropriate parenting behaviour. In this complex and contested environemnt and given the limited space available, this chpater can do no more than a very selective review of the main lines of current thinking.

1.1 Children and Childhood

While in the past the study of childhood was mainly carried out by psychologists and those interested in child development, nowadays childhood studies constitute a

thriving field of multi-disciplinary research. The social sciences have 'discovered' childhood and so there is now a vibrant body of research on children and childhood.

Over time, assumptions about the basic nature of children and about the role that parents play in child-rearing have changed greatly. Socialisation has been a prominent way of understanding child-rearing – it refers to those processes whereby society's standards of beliefs and behaviour are transmitted from one generation to the next. Acquisition of such standards is seen as one of the principal tasks or functions of childhood. Schaffer (1996) charts a number of models of the socialisation process (Table 1.1). Each has been popular at different periods; the last one – the mutuality ideal - is currently considered as the most appropriate.

Table 1.1 Models of Socialisation of Children

Model	Concept of child	Parental behaviour	Focus of research
Laissez-faire	Preformed	Leave alone	Plotting norms of development
Clay molding	Passive	Shaping and training	Effects of rewards and punishment
Conflict	Antisocial	Discipline	Parent-child conflicts
Mutuality	Participant	Sensitivity and responsiveness	Reciprocity in social interaction

Source: Schaffer (1996).

The first approach to the bringing up of children, the laissez-faire model, is the most long-standing, having been described by Rousseau in the 18th century. It draws on the belief that each child arrives in the world preformed, with all basic aspects of personality already laid down and having merely to unfold in the course of subsequent development. The task of parents, then, is mainly to confine themselves to providing a maximally permissive environment in which children's potential can realise itself. The second model is based on a directly opposing view of the child - as wholly unformed at birth and passive, like a lump of clay that adults can mould into their preferred shape. In this perspective the behaviour of the caretakers is the key to how socialisation comes about: it is their rewards and punishments, their ways of habit training and their example that fashion the final product. The third approach, the conflict model, views children as having wishes and desires of their own from the outset which impel them to behave in ways which bring them into conflict with their caretakers. The adults' task is, then, to compel children to give up their natural preferences and adopt modes of behaviour regarded as desirable by adults. This view has its origins in the notion that children are originally evil (and that the task of the caretakers is to curb their sinful tendencies)

and is in modern times associated with the work of Sigmund Freud.

Empirical research questions each of these three models. According to Philips and Alderson (2003) new evidence challenges the idea that babies begin at zero and adulthood is the perfect end-point. Neither are adults assumed always to be wise, informed and reasonable. In effect today, greater equality between children and adults is accepted, leading to the fourth model – the mutuality model. It this view, and there is research to support this, from the earliest age children take an active part in their own upbringing. Hence, rather than being seen as passive, children should be more appropriately viewed as participants. Further, mutual adaptation, not conflict, is now accepted as the basic theme running through the course of parent-child interaction. Far from starting off as an antisocial being that must be coerced into sociability the infant begins life pre-adapted for social interaction. Hence the mutuality model is now the most widely-accepted understanding of child development in the academic literature.

The new sociology of childhood has helped to flesh out the mutuality model, emphasising children's transitions from an object of adults' upbringing to a subject with their own representation and co-producers of their own childhood. Children are seen as competent and active. This view of the child as actor in a social world serves to question the very concept of socialisation because it is an alternative approach to understanding development. If the child is seen as passive and receptive, 'taking on' influences from significant others (like in traditional meaning of socialisation), it is difficult to see him or her as an acting person, producing change when relating to others in social transactions (Sommer 1998).

Power is a strong sub-theme in the contemporary literature on childhood. Sorin and Galloway (2005) argue that only through the construction of the acting child can the power between adults and children become balanced as adults and children work together to build relationships of mutual respect and growth. In this view the child is competent and capable and adults are co-learners who negotiate, challenge and guide through reflection on their own experiences. They negotiate and share power with children, without disclaiming leadership. Within this construction of the agentic child, children and adults both have power, which is negotiated as a critically conscious component of their relationship. The child is empowered through the relationship with the adult, who lends their power, strength and resources to the child, rather than imposing them upon him or her. Through this process, the adult is also empowered and made knowledgeable.

1.2 Parenting and its Determinants

Parenting (what parents do with and provide for their children) involves tasks (e.g. giving physical care, boundary setting and teaching social behaviour), behaviours (e.g. responsiveness, affection and positive regard) and relationship qualities (e.g. providing for emotional security and secure attachment) (Quinton, 2004: 27).

While there is no universal agreement on what constitutes the duties or responsibilities of parenting, the following, identified by Campion (1995), is a comprehensive account:


Main Tasks of Parenting

- To provide basic care and to protect and nurture the child until an agreed age;
- To ensure the safety of the child;
- To provide guidance and boundaries;
- To provide the child with stability;
- To provide the conditions for the child's intellectual, emotional and social development, including the passing on of certain agreed skills and the modelling of desired behaviours;
- To abide by the law and contribute to society's security and safety;
- To contribute to the economic prosperity of the nation.

With regard to determinants of parenting the general consensus now is that parental behaviour is shaped by multiple influences, including the parents' individual characteristics and resources, the characteristics of the child and contextual sources of both stress and support, especially material living conditions and quality of relations with partners, relatives and friends (Belsky 1984; Simons and Johnson 1996). As time goes by there is greater recognition of the influences of the broader social environment in which the parent-child relationship is embedded, including community/social support and the societal/cultural context (Voydanoff and Donnelly 1998; Belsky and Statton 2002;). The ecology of parenting approach, deeveloped originally by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which is underlied by an acceptance that variation in how parents manage their parenting responsibilities reflects what they have available to them in the way of resources and support as well as their skills and characteristics, is now widely accepted. Quinton (2004) argues that services should be seen as a part of the ecology of parenting.

In sum then, scholarship is increasingly moving towards a holistic conception of parenting and its influences. A widely-used conceptualisation which combines the content and the context of parenting is provided by the model in Figure 1.1. It brings together three inter-related systems: the child's developmental needs, parents' or caregivers' abilities to respond to those needs appropriately and the positive and negative situational and environmental influences. This multidimensional model holds that parenting emerges from an interaction between the parenting resources and capacity, the child's developmental needs and family and environmental factors. The framework was developed in the UK as a tool to guide the assessment of children in need and the situation and needs of their families but has also been used effectively in many other countries, including Australia, Canada, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, the Ukraine and USA (Gray et al n.d.). It is also being incorporated into the child protection training materials being developed by WHO Europe.

Figure 1.1 Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families
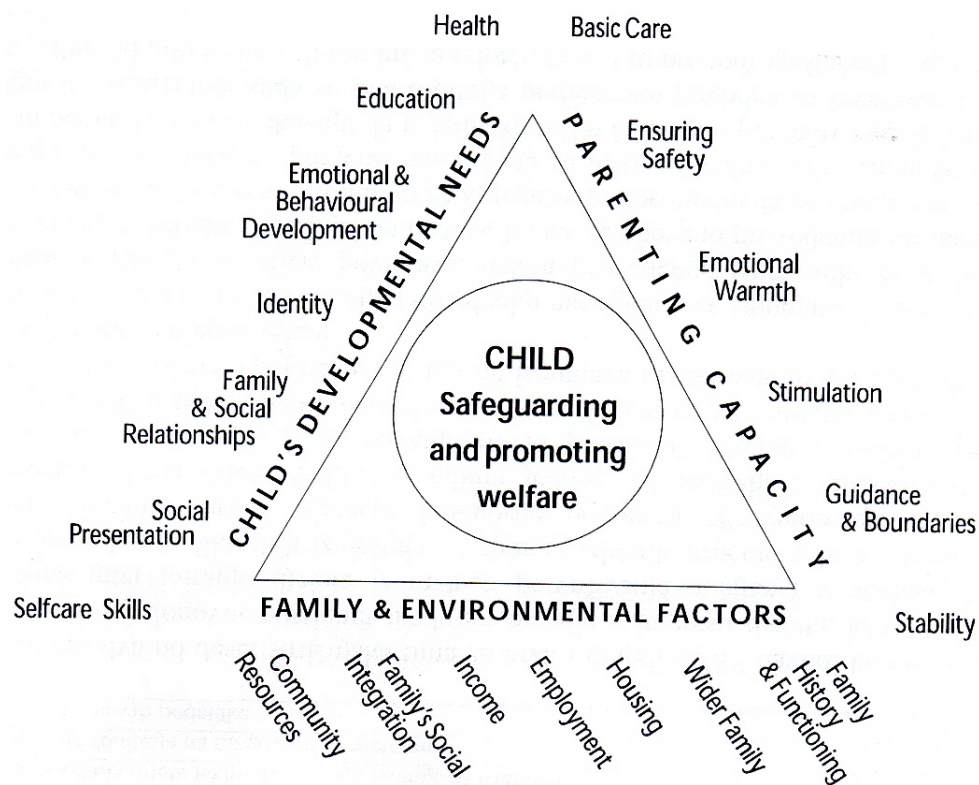
Source:

It will be seen that this multidimensional model moves away from emphasising a particular parenting style. It certainly does not see the parenting style as given but holds that it emerges from an interaction between the parenting resources and capacity, the child's developmental needs and family and environmental factors.

1.3 Conceptions of Positive Parenting
In this section, given the voluminous nature of the literature, we focus first on the state of knowledge on parenting of young children. We then move on to a more general dicusssion of parenting, focusing especially on current thinking about positive practices in parenting.

1.3.1 Parenting of Very Young Children
Whether children develop in an optimum and harmonious fashion very much depends on the education, upbringing and care that they receive during their first years of life.

Parents' sensitivity and responsiveness during interactions in early infancy play an important part in the formation of a secure or insecure infant attachment. However, the need to consider the wider context of parenting and family life, the interaction of maternal/parental sensitivity and the accumulaton of stresses and risk factors was also emphasised.

Academics and other experts tend to agree that there are three main aspects to good parenting of young children:
- protecting children;
- helping them to organise their emotions, to enable them to regulate their behaviour to reflect internal and external needs and requirements;
- encouraging learning and the exploration of their environments to increase their understanding of the physical and social world.

Any discussion of the optimisation of parenting for young children calls for a greater focus on the positive treatment of children and a number of basic processes that regulate relations between parents and their very young (0 to 3) children. Positive treatment of children is considered to be a function of four processes:
- reality and authenticity of the parents;
- sensitivity of the parents;
- synchrony and practice of the repetitive operant contingency;
- quality of affective exchanges.

The underlying idea of reality and authenticity of parents is to go beyond the notion of attachment described extensively in the child psychology literature and pay more attention to parents' understanding of their role in child development. It is very important to examine parents' beliefs about the influences that they exert on children. 'Sincerity of attachment' is vital and it is demonstrated by the extent of parents' interest in and focus on the child, for example non-rejection or strict punishment. There has to be a recognition that parents' attachment, or rather their reality and authenticity, can suffer at an early stage from certain dysfunctional elements such as when parents exhibit severe psychiatric disorders, fathers abandoning their children, fathers' hostility to mother's over-investment or ill-treatment of either.

Sensitivity is the measure of parents' capacity to identify and interpret children's signals and intentions and then respond to them rapidly and appropriately. Through this quality, children recognise that they themselves are effective agents who can, at least partially, determine their own experiences. Parents satisfy their basic needs but they also facilitate the relationships between the children's actions and their effects on the environment through the manipulation of objects and a wide variety of social interactions, such as speaking, smiling, eye contact, holding, postural adjustments, caressing and cuddling. Parental sensitivity cannot be defined in isolation from the child. Children differ with regard to the clarity and initiation of their signals. Sensitivity is influenced by parental attitudes that are themselves strongly dependent on cultural paradigms that change over time and space. Immature and/or mentally retarded parents tend to display significantly reduced sensitivity.

The notion of synchrony is an extension of that of sensitivity. Parent-child interactions will be all the more meaningful if they take account of a very precise temporal contingential relationship. This concept is based on parents' close attention to their children and on systematic practice of the repetitive operant contingency. This principle is based on two theoretical principles:

- even very young children are active beings who can influence their own progress, and their development is closely bound up with their ability to shape their environment;
- the child's physical and social environment is an integral part of development, because of its role in the selection of forms of behaviour.

Adults make abundant use of toys, smiles, caresses and language as stimuli (reinforcers) to initiate responses in children and increase their frequency of occurrence. The stimulus must be contingent to (i.e., synchronic with) the behaviour. Parents must be sure that the child's response is in reaction to the presentation of an object or a verbal statement. The material must be functional and lend itself to clearly perceptible stimulation. Finally, this learning principle only applies if it is reproduced systematically during interactions. It is, in fact, the synchronic repetition of operant contingencies that leads to the lasting establishment of more complex forms of behaviour.

As Lalière et al (2004) have noted, by becoming active and recognising that they are having an effect on their environment, children acquire a sense of effectiveness that encourages them to act in new situations in such a way as to modify their environment. In contrast, repeated experiences where there is no relationship between behaviour and events activate extinction processes, which are precursors of passivity or withdrawal. From a social standpoint, therefore, children are recognised as active participants in their own development.

The fourth factor – quality of affective exchanges - has received considerable attention in the child psychology literature. However, certain interactions between parents and their children call for an optimal affective quality:

- emotional expressions clearly directed towards the child and adapted to its behaviour, for example, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, doubt or questioning, via facial gestures and motor and verbal behaviour;
- clearly felt and expressed joy in direct response to the child;
- affective warmth – positive attitude to the child evinced through caresses, cuddles, kissing and a tone of voice and choice of words that indicate tenderness;
- protective affective attitudes, such as consolation in response to tears, protection against anxiety-inducing stimuli and control of fears, while avoiding strict and violent punitive attitudes and reactions that imply rejection.

Optimum parenting through the positive treatment of children therefore involves the active and comprehensive integration of these four processes.

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1.3.2 Research on Parenting of Older Children
In the last 30 years the most popular conceptualisation of parents' influence on child and adolescent development has been that of 'parenting styles'. Starting from the ideas of Diana Baumrind (1971), Maccoby and Martin (1983) have suggested that parenting styles can be defined along two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness. 'Demandingness' refers to the claims that parents make on children to become integrated into the family and is given effect by parental expectations, supervision and disciplinary efforts. In other words, it refers to the amount of parental control, maturity demands and supervision manifested in their parenting. 'Responsiveness' refers to the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to children's needs and demands. It is manifested by affective warmth, acceptance and involvement.

By way of overview of research on parenting styles, we can say that:

- Research on children from two age groups (5-11 and 12-18) indicates that an optimal form of parenting practice is represented in strong support, the avoidance of harsh punishment and high monitoring/parental knowledge and it applies to most children, across diverse family contexts (lone or two parent, poor or non-poor) (Amato and Fowler 2002). Children appear to do best when parents are warm and supportive, spend generous amounts of time with children, know a lot about children's daily lives, expect children to follow rules, encourage open communication and react to misbehavior with discussion rather than harsh punishment (ibid).

- There is greater consensus from research about parental responsiveness and warmth than on parental demandingness and control. Studies in the field of attachment as well as those in the field of social support have found parental support and warmth to be associated with positive socio-emotional adjustment in adolescence, including high levels of self-esteem and pro-social behavior and low levels of aggression, anxiety, and depression (Maccoby and Martin 1983; Liable and Carlo 2004; Rohner and Khaleque 2005). Support and warmth from parents are presumed to enhance competence through several mechanisms. According to Liable and Carlo (2004: 760), first, children are more likely to embrace parental values if they perceive their relationships with parents as mutually responsive. Second, children are also presumed to acquire through positive relationships with parents positive affective social orientations that they generalise to others (Putallaz and Heflin 1990). Finally, children are also thought to gain important social information processing skills from parental interactions, information that, in turn, enhances interactions with peers (Pettit et al 1991).

- In contrast to support, the influence of parental control on adolescent adjustment is less clear-cut - control can both inhibit and facilitate development. The impact seems to depend on the way in which parents implement rules and norms in their relationship with their children, in other words, on the type of control. Whereas flexible, behavioural control has been linked with positive adolescent adjustment,

rigid or so-called psychological control by parents seems to have negative impact on adolescent psychosocial development. Psychological control constrains, invalidates and manipulates the child's psychological and emotional experience and expression (Barber 1996). It has been said to consist of coercive discipline and to supress individuality (Engels et al 2005). It is believed to impair and exploit the parent-child bond, is often accompanied by negative affect and it diminishes an adolescent's sense of personal control (Barber 1996).

- Psychological control or control coupled with rejection from parents has been found to detract from an adolescent's own sense of control over the environment and to contribute to feelings of unworthiness (Kerr and Stattin 2000). In addition, rejection by parents appears to be especially detrimental to the internalisation of parental values and to the development of moral emotions such as sympathy. The negative emotions aroused by harsh and rejecting parenting practices are likely to be too high for those practices to be effective in socialisation (Hoffman 1983, cited in Liable and Carlo 2004).

In modern parenting research, the evidence is growing that a valid understanding of parenting has to include reciprocal relationships – how parents are influenced by children as well as how children are influenced by parents (they shape each other). The reciprocal and bidirectional nature of parent-child interactions is demonstrated by very young children as well as adolescents. Family relationships should be about members all learning to cooperate with each other, rather than educating only children how to cooperate.

1.3.3 A Number of Approaches to Positive Parenting
Using a family therapy perspective Juul (2005) examines what is healthy for each individual's personal and social development – regardless of age and gender – and for their mutual relationships. He speaks in terms of adult leadership, and formulates a list of the qualities that the adult's leadership ideally should include in order to ensure children an optimal childhood. His approach is to view children as beings rather than 'becomings', and hence he is concerned to identify the kind of parenting that is good for children's childhood, as well as their future development. The new sets of belief are listed alongside those qualities that were in force a generation ago. It should be noted that the two sets of beliefs and behaviours stem from two sets of incompatible values.

Table 1.2 Qualities of Adult Leadership Today and in the Past

Now	Previously
Authenticity	Role playing
Personal authority	Authoritarianism
Interest	Control
Dialogue/negotiation	Lecturing//punishment
Recognition	Criticism/praise
Power	Power
Involvement/inclusion	

Authenticity, authentic feelings/being a real person, gives parents the necessary personal authority to be able to influence and make an impression on children throughout their entire childhood.

Personal authority derives from a parent who is authentic, personal, one who has integrity. Authentic feelings make up the foundation of personal authority, but often personal integrity and responsibility need to be built on top of that, that is, the adult's care for his or her own needs, limits and values. This of course looses its impact and credibility if it does not also include care for the child's integrity. As soon as the adult starts to use his or her power to define the child and the adult talks about or categorises the child, equal dignity ceases, and the result is abuse of power. Juul (2005) names this characteristic of the new parental role as 'sparring' after the 'sparring partner' in boxing – a training partner who gives maximal resistance and does minimal damage. The parental role of 'sparring partner' is very important for the development of personal responsibility in the child. Juul is of the view that personal authority grows every time that parents dare to be open, vulnerable and flexible and are willing to bear the responsibility for the quality of the family's interaction instead of blaming the children or each other.

Interest is manifested when, rather than questioning children, parents address the children with personal statements, telling them something about themselves.

Dialogue and negotiation, according to Juul, are not about democracy but equal dignity (that everyone feels heard and taken seriously). It is not about children's right to influence but about the community's need for their contribution. Based on the dialogue and their own life experience, parents must then make the decision that they see as the most appropriate.

Acknowledgement and involvement follow the interest in who the child is and refers to parents acknowledging the child's views and feelings. This is a prerequisite for involving children in decision-making.

Power, or the way that parents choose to use their psychological and physical authority, is considered by Juul as the most crucial element for children's well-being and development. Parents' administration of this power mostly determines whether children obtain the possibility of completely utilising their personal and social potential.

Another conceptualisation of positive parenting is provided by Sanders and Cann (2002). They describe five core positive parenting principles that form the basis of promoting positive parenting programmes. These principles address specific risk and protective factors known to predict positive developmental and mental health outcomes in children. They are as follows:

- *Ensuring a safe and engaging environment*: children of all ages need a safe, supervised and protective environment that provides opportunities for them to explore, experiment and play;
- *Creating a positive learning environment*: this might require educating parents on how to respond positively and constructively to child-initiated interactions (e.g., requests for help, information, advice, attention) through incidental teaching to assist children learn to solve problems for themselves;
- *Using assertive discipline*: instead of coercive and ineffective discipline practices, assertive discipline is recommended. Parents may have to be taught behaviour change procedures and specific child management strategies that are alternatives to coercive and ineffective discipline practices (such as shouting, threatening or using physical punishment);
- *Having realistic expectations and developmentally appropriate goals*: This involves exploring with parents their expectations, assumptions and beliefs about the causes of children's behaviour and choosing goals that are developmentally appropriate for the child and realistic for the parent;
- *Taking care of oneself as a parent*: Parenting is affected by a range of factors that impact on a parent's self esteem and sense of well-being. Parents are encouraged to view parenting as part of a larger context of personal self-care, resourcefulness and well-being. Parents develop specific coping strategies for managing difficult emotions including depression, anger, anxiety and high levels of parenting stress at high-risk times for stress.

These core principles translate into a range of specific parenting skills. The core parenting skills that follow from this approach include: observation skills; parent-child relationship enhancement skills; encouraging desirable behaviour; teaching children new skills and behaviours; managing misbehaviour; preventing problems in high risk situations; self-regulation skills; mood management and coping skills; partner support and communication skills (Sanders and Cann 2002).

Above all, it is important to acknowledge that 'good parenting' is a subject on which there are still many open questions. The theory and research offer heterogeneous suggestions, although more so when it comes to the regulatory/supervisory side of parenting than on the relational side of parenting (emotional warmth and responsiveness to the child's needs). Also, differences and problems emerge when general principles are

translated into suggestions about concrete actions in everyday parenting situations. At this very moment, new research findings are being produced, promising answers to the questions about what parents can do to foster good psychosocial adjustment of their children. Therefore, we must acknowledge that we are taking part in a continuous, mutual learning process of defining parenting in the best interests of the child.

Apart from psychological research, ideas about 'good parenting' also emerge from UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1.4 International Legal Context of Parenting and Childhood

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, hereafter UNCRC, dominates contemporary thinking on children and their rights. It also figures large as a factor influencing governmental reform of family policy. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, the Convention is a human rights treaty that is ratified by all except two states (Somalia and the USA). The UNCRC explicitly places the child as a subject of rights and it sets standards for states about the rights that they should recognise and assure to all citizens aged under 18 years. The UNCRC contains many civil, social, economic, educational, cultural and other rights. Some of its obligations fall directly on states, while others are addressed to the child's parents or legal guardians. All rights are considered necessary for a child's full psychophysical and social development. In other words, the UNCRC is indivisible and its articles are interdependent.

Four principles have been identified as general principles of relevance to the implementation of the UNCRC (Hodgkin and Newell 2002). These are:

Four Principles of Relevance to the Implementation of the UNCRC

- the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2);
- the principle that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning the child (Article 3);
- the principle of the child's right to life and maximum possible survival and development (Article 6);
- the principle of respect for the child's views in all matters affecting the child (Article 12).

The UNCRC challenges the belief and practice that parents have absolute rights over their children. Moreover, with regard to parenthood it shifts the emphasis from parental authority to parental responsibility. The convention is informed by a belief that the conception of parental authority results from a historical and cultural development in which children have primarily been considered part of a family and in that respect their parents' 'property'. The UNCRC promotes a different vision: it envisages that families provide a first stage democratic experience for every individual member, including children – an

experience shaped by values of mutual respect which strengthens the child's capacity for informed participation in the decision-making process.

Some fear that treating a child as a rights holder will result in the undermining of parental rights and abandon children to their autonomy. However, according to Jaap E. Doek (2004), Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UNCRC is not only a 'child friendly' human rights document but is also friendly to parents, families and communities/societies. He underscores the point that the UNCRC does not see the child as a stand-alone individual and does not intend to serve only the self-interests of that stand-alone person. The Preamble to the UNCRC states that one of the most important conditions for the realisation of the rights of the child is that s/he grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. Given this vital role, the family should be afforded the necessary assistance to allow it to fully assume its responsibilities within the community. With regard to society, the UNCRC states that the child should be brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity and it also contains provisions mentioning that the child should be prepared for responsible life in a free society and for assuming a constructive role in it.

1.4.1 The UNCRC Provisions Dealing with Parenting

The UNCRC contains provisions that have direct repercussions for parenting. Parental responsibilities are explicitly mentioned in Articles 5, 18 and 27. There are two core messages in the UNCRC about parental responsibilities (Doeck 2004). First, states should recognize parental responsibilities and take various positive measures to support parents in performing their child-rearing responsibilities. States have the (secondary) responsibility of guaranteeing and promoting children's rights in the family – to support parents' acting in the child's best interest, providing adequate living conditions for development and ensuring other rights of the child (e.g. protection from violence). Second, the UNCRC allocates to parents the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, and exhorts that the best interests of the child be their basic concern (art. 18). It is implied that states are required to undertake legislative, social and other measures that can encourage and facilitate parents to act in accordance with the obligation to act in accordance with the best interest of the child.

The UNCRC also lays out what parents should do in the best interests of the child (with Articles 5 and 27 especially devoted to this). First, parents should provide to the child, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of his or her rights as enshrined in the UNCRC (Article 5). Direction and guidance is 'appropriate' when it is provided in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child (e.g., as the child gets older, the parents should give him or her more and more responsibility for personal matters). That is, parents should facilitate the child's increasing exercise of autonomy. The concept of evolving capacities acknowledges children's development towards adulthood and is linked to the requirement that children's views should be given due weight in accordance with age and maturity (Article 12). Article 5 also assumes that parents should allow the child to exercise his or her rights in a rather independent way if he/she has capacities to do so. But the concept of 'evolving capacity' does not refer only to children's growing

autonomy of parents. It relates also to the child's process of maturation and parents' responsibility not to demand or expect from the child anything that is inappropriate to the child's developmental state (Hodgkin and Newell 2002). Second, the UNCRC ordains that parents should secure the living conditions which provide for full and harmonious development of the child. According to Article 27, parents have the primary responsibility, within their abilities and financial capacities, to ensure to the child the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Two additional rights are relevant with respect to the parental responsibility for providing appropriate guidance and direction – respect for the views of the child (Article 12) and protection from all forms of violence (Article 19).

One of the four general principles of the UNCRC is the child's right to be heard. Article 12 requires states to ensure that the child who is capable of forming his or her own views have the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child and that the views of the child are being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This does not provide a right to self-determination but concerns involvement in decision-making processes affecting the child's life. The reference to the evolving capacities of the child emphasises the need to respect the child's developing capacity for decision making (Hodgkin and Newell 2002). This provision underscores the parental responsibility to hear and take seriously the child's views and encourage child's participation in decision-making (within family). Expectations that parents provide appropriate guidance and direction, in a manner that takes into consideration the evolving capacities of the child, and the child's right to be heard and that his or her views be given due weight imply that a shared, positive and responsible dialogue should prevail between parents and children. The other aspect relating to parental responsibility for guidance and direction is that it must not take the form of violent or humiliating discipline. The latter is incompatible with the provisions of the UNCRC (Article 19, Article 37 on inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment) (see chapter 4 below).

In conclusion, according to the UNCRC, the child is entitled to care, security and an upbringing that is respectful of his or her person and individuality. Parents are entitled to support by the state in fulfilling their parental function. The overall purpose of parental actions should be the guarantee and promotion of the rights of the child as set forth in the UNCRC (Doeck 2004). It is important to underline that, parallel to expectations about how parents should fulfill parental responsibilities, there is the expectation that the state should ensure the necessary measures of support. In that sense the UNCRC also acknowledges the 'ecology of parenting' in that it is underlied by an acceptance that variation in how parents manage their parenting responsibilities reflects what they have available to them in the way of resources and support as well as their skills and characteristics (Quinton 2004).

1.4.2 Implications of the UNCRC for Parenting
It should first be pointed out that the UNCRC reinforces and endorses the primary role of parents in raising children. Hence as Henricson and Bainham (2005: 23) point out, the child's rights are first and foremost protected within the context of the family and the state giving proper support to families. Essentially, however, the present generation of parents will have to develop ways in which to make the UNCRC vision a reality in their

family lives. To make children's rights present in everyday interactions at home is difficult and challenging, not least because there are few models and little experience to rely on. For example, a study accross 12 European countries suggest that in families participation rights exist to lower level than the protection rights (Hart et al. 2001). The primary goal of this section is to explore how parenting may be (made) consistent with the UNCRC principles and identify those principles that enhance the child's well-being and development.

We can start with the UNCRC requirement that the child's best interest should be the parent's main concern in parenting. In general, this implies that children's needs should have priority over those of parents. With respect to particular parenting practices, research demonstrates the importance of the parents' centre of concern. This can and does vary. In their interactions with their children, parents can focus on their own needs (e.g., obtaining obedience or short-term compliance), on those of the child (with a distinction between empathic and socialization goals) or on the relationship (fostering close and harmonious bonds among family members) (Hastings and Grusec 1998). The particular focus adopted has been found to affect behaviour. Research has noted that parents focused on achieving outcomes that fulfilled their own needs were most likely to be punitive and controlling and were least likely to try talking with their children, settling on a compromise, or being warm and accepting. Conversely, when parents' concern centered on children's needs, open communication and providing explanations were the strategies most preferred, with coercion, punishment, and derogation avoided.

When put together the different elements of the UNCRC could be read as meaning that the child is entitled to nurturing, structure, recognition and empowerment.

Parenting in the Vision of the UNCRC

Parenting should provide the following to the child:
- nurturing
- structure
- recognition
- empowerment

Nurturing responds to the child's need for emotional nourishment, security, belonging and secure attachment. Parental warmth, acceptance, sensitivity, responsiveness, involvement and support are characteristics oriented to this need.

Structure refers to standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and role models provided by parents. The child needs borders and guidance for his or her physical and psychological security and the development of personal and social responsibility and his or her own values. It should be pointed out though that punishment for unacceptable behaviour has to be respectful of the child's person and dignity, and should be such as to leave the child 'a dignified way out'.

Recognition refers to the child's need to be acknowledged and have his/her personal experience responded to and confirmed by parents. Acknowledging and respecting the child's experience and views fosters the child's personal development to its full potential. Recognition is also expressed in a child's participation in decision-making processes in the family – the child needs to be allowed to have a say, play an active part, be able to grow and develop and blossom. A parent really listening to the child and trying to understand his or her point of view fosters development of mutual respect.

Empowerment refers to combining a sense of personal control with the ability to affect the behaviour of others. It implies a focus on enhancing existing strengths in a child, and reflects a belief that power is not a scarce commodity but rather one that can be generated and regenerated (Gutierrez 1990 cited in Fraser and Galinsky 1997). In this regard it is vital that parents respect the evolving capacity of a child and recognise that childhood and parenthood are both dynamic processes. Hence, parents need to change and develop their behaviour and ideas as their children grow and develop (displaying an openness to learning and a parental capacity to grow in a relationship). In addition it needs to be recognised that growth is not linear. Hence, parents need to allow for the child's 'to' and 'fro' from dependency to autonomy and back.

1.4.3 <u>What is Not Parenting in the Best Interests of the Child?</u>

If the child's psychophysical development is being impaired by parental actions or omissions than parental responsibilities are not being fulfilled in accordance with the principles of the child's best interest (and right to maximum development). The UNCRC provisions explicitly exclude the possibility of violent or humiliating punishment by persons with parental responsibility. According to Glaser and Prior (2002: 59) emotional abuse and neglect, increasingly recognised as violation of children's rights, include the following:

- emotional unavailability, unresponsiveness and neglect (parents are unable to respond to the child's emotional needs, due to preoccupation with own difficulties);
- negative attributions and misattributions to the child (hostility and rejection, the child perceived as deserving these);
- developmentally inappropriate or inconsistent interactions with the child (developmentally unrealistic expectations of the child, over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, exposure to confusing or traumatic events and interactions);
- failure to recognise or acknowledge the child's individuality and psychological boundary (using the child for fullfilment of the parent's psychological needs, inability to distinguish between the child's reality and the adult's beliefs and wishes);
- failing to promote the child's social adaptation (promoting mis-socialization, psychological neglect/failure to provide adequate cognitive stimulation and/or opportunities for experiential learning).

2.

**SOUTIEN À LA PARENTALITÉ POUR LES FAMILLES
MENACÉES D'EXCLUSION SOCIALE: POUR UN PLEIN
EXERCICE DES FONCTIONS PARENTALES QUEL QUE SOIT LE
STATUT SOCIAL DES FAMILLES**
(based on the work of Gilbert Berlioz)
please note that this chapter is still very incomplete

The concept of parenting is evolving at a time when the role of the family, the place of the child and population renewal are posing challenges to all European countries. As mentioned in the Introduyction, the concept of parenting carries within it the idea that being a parent is not just a biological or social fact, but also the culmination of a psychological maturing process in adults who are in the process of becoming parents. In such a context, support for parenting is all the more necessary given that family models are changing to varying degrees in all European societies and all social classes. For families in 'at-risk' situations, in particular the risk of social exclusion, it is of special significance, since despite economic growth, such situations have become widespread and affect large numbers of families and children (Council of Europe 1998; UNICEF 2005). Accordingly, parenting takes on a social, economic, cultural and political dimension and cannot be regarded as being solely a private matter involving parents and their children alone.

2.1 Social Exclusion: an Economic, Personal and Social Issue

Social exclusion involves a number of processes which leave individuals living in extremely vulnerable material and personal conditions. It encompasses objective factors of lack of financial resources alongside other levels of difficulty (Duffy 1995).

While lack of financial resources means an inability to enjoy goods and services, social exclusion means that those experiencing it are unable to play a full role in the community, and more especially in the fields of employment, housing, social participation and education. Social inclusion is reflected in the ability to maintain relations with:
- the economic sphere (the market and money),
- the political sphere (the state and authority),
- the social sphere (civil society and horizontal solidarities).

Families at high risk of exclusion are those with inadequate or non-existent relationships in one or more of these spheres.

When experiencing social exclusion, families are unable to solve their problems unaided. Exclusion, it must be realised, is a problem in terms of a person's links with society. It prevents individuals from having stable relations with others and from feeling an integral

part of the community; it also diminishes their ability to transmit values to the children in their care, especially in a context of extreme poverty. Furthermore, a community's poverty is often aggravated by the low level of services available for them: education, social, medical and cultural services.[1]

The lack of national programmes to reduce the inequalities in children's chances of success leaves local authorities powerless to respond. They are unable to narrow the gap between those families threatened with social exclusion and others, thereby exacerbating the initial situation.

Accordingly, the reasons why not all the requisite conditions for bringing children up appropriately are met may be objective (financial, political, cultural and family dysfunction) or subjective (psychological dysfunction).

2.2 The Most Vulnerable Situations

On the basis of the work carried out in recent years, there are three population groups which are particularly at risk of social exclusion:

2.2.1 Families Suffering Extreme Poverty

Statistically speaking[2] in Europe, a person is considered to be poor when his or her standard of living falls below 60% of the living standard in his or her country. The same is true of households. A household is considered to be poor when it lives below the poverty threshold, understood as being a percentage (60%) of the median standard of living of all households, ie the net equivalised income in a household with children after tax. Lastly, a child is considered to be poor when he or she lives in a poor household.[3]

In general, the majority of children under the age of 16 live in families with both parents and a brother or sister, but there are significant disparities from one country to another.[4]

Table 2.1 Percentage of Children under the age of 16 According to their Family Situation when?/which year

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[1] See the report of the European project on "Tackling social exclusion in families with young children" carried out in 2002 by Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The countries involved noted the multidimensionality of social exclusion and its "association with stigma (…) it is a process of accumulating disadvantage rather than a multifaceted state (…) an obstruction of rights and opportunities originating in external factors or subjective perceptions. Low participation in society (…) inadequate financial resources, feelings of isolation and powerlessness and poor social support were identified as core elements." Contribution from Cécile RENOUX – ATD Fourth World in "Collection of contributions concerning good practices of parenting of children at risk of social exclusion. Council of Europe, 21 September 2005.

[2] According to Eurostat criteria – which criteria

[3] The definition of "child" is not standardised throughout Europe. In most cases, family benefit is paid up to the age of 21. But a person under the age of 21 who is himself or herself a parent is no longer considered as a child.

[4] Source: European Community Household Panel, Eurostat, Wave 3 (Income 1995), DREES No. 201 November 2002. A Lapinte.

	Couple with 1 child	Couple with 2 children	Couple with 3 or more children	Lone-parent family	Complex household
B	15	38	32	12	4
DK	18	43	28	9	2
D	19	42	25	10	4
EL	16	49	17	4	14
E	16	47	20	2	14
F	16	39	34	8	3
IRL	7	25	52	9	8
I	21	45	20	5	9
L	15	38	29	5	12
NL	11	45	36	7	2
A	17	40	18	9	16
P	17	37	21	6	19
FIN	14	36	34	14	2
UK	14	35	25	20	5

Source: DREES (2002)

Comments: (to follow from G. Berlioz)

Table 2.2 Percentage of Children According to Number of People in Work in the Household (when?/which year)

	0	1 part-time	1 part-time and 1 full-time	1 full-time	2 full-time
B	16	3	16	33	31
DK	6	3	14	24	52
D	9	4	27	37	23
EL	8	2	5	50	34
E	14	3	7	53	23
F	8	2	11	38	40
IRL	23	7	13	39	17
I	7	4	9	55	26
L	6	2	21	52	19
NL	8	4	40	41	6
A	8	4	20	36	31
P	7	2	6	35	51
FIN	14	2	5	41	38
UK	21	6	27	25	19

Comments: (to follow from G. Berlioz)

Table 2.3 Proportion of Family Benefits in GDP ==when?/which year==

B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK
2,3	4,1	2	0,2	0	2,6	2	1	3,2	1,4	3	1,1	4	2,3

Comments: (to follow ==from G. Berlioz==)

Tabel 2.4 Relative Living Standard of Children by Family Type
==Which country/year does this apply to?==

	Initial living standard	Living standard after redistribution	Relative change
Couple with 1 child	128	120	- 6 %
Couple with 2 children	110	106	- 4 %
Couple with three or more children	86	92	+ 6 %
Lone-parent family	55	78	+ 41 %
Complex family	84	84	0

==Comments: (to follow from Berlioz)==

2.2.2 Lone-parent Families

The concept of lone-parent families varies according to the country, context and criteria chosen. In general, a lone-parent family is defined as a family with dependent children that is headed by one parent only.[5] The 'lone parent' may be male or female, but is more frequently female. However, a distinction must be made between:

- situations where the man is absent periodically and the woman assumes the role of family head;
- situations where there is no legal partner but where there may be a de facto partner.

As times change and it is accepted that people should be able to choose how to live their lives, there has been an increase not only in the number of lone-parent families but also in their visibility. The fact of being a lone-parent family does not necessarily entail poverty, but situations of poverty more easily lead to lone-parent families.

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[5] Department for Work and Pensions (UK), Glossary

2.2.3 <u>Ethnic Minorities, with special reference to Nomadic Groups</u>[6]
-- To be inserted --

2.3 Problems of Access to Social Rights

-- To be inserted --

2.4 Families at Risk of Exclusion and the Difficulties of Maintaining a Link to Society

Families at risk of social exclusion are destabilised in two ways:
  - by the changes occurring in the modern family;
  - and by the vulnerable conditions and isolation in which they live.

Parenting is a true challenge to these families. They need help, for the family should be a resourcefor its children, not a handicap. society must also constitute a resource for parenting, rather than the family's social condition being a handicap.

The nature of adults' relations with their social environment and their own family history has its effects on their capacity to perform their parental functions. Isolation, a lack of resource persons around them, social and emotional vulnerability, insecurity and poverty all make it more difficult for parents to perform their functions.

In order to carry out these functions, parents need to be able:
  - to grasp and analyse situations and learn from them,
  - to take decisions which are beneficial to child development,
  - to honour their commitments to giving structure to their children's lives.

Also required is a series of reference points, beliefs, moral strength, know-how and self-confidence on which parents can draw to find consistent and effective child-rearing practices.

2.5 From Poor Links with Society to Poor Parenting

The part that parents play in society (the intensity, extent and diversity of their relationships) either provides a resource or constitutes a deficit where child-rearing is concerned, so it either promotes or inhibits their ability to carry out their parental functions in full.

The part that individuals play in society depends on a process that draws on their ability to relate to their family, their neighbours and neighbourhood, institutions, the world of work, and, more broadly, the whole of the community in which they live.

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[6] "Project for the Gypsy ethnic group in the city of Sliven (Bulgaria)". Avramov D-Feantsa, - Brussels 1995

Poverty - extreme poverty in particular - is a severe handicap in this process. There are different poverty indicators (financial, social, cultural, etc) which vary from country to country. They are difficult to establish and are usually a subject of debate both within the country and internationally, making them impossible to calculate. It is nevertheless universally agreed that, below a certain threshold of resources, the problems of financial survival take over from all other considerations and make complete parenting difficult. Individuals in a vulnerable situation, whether socially, professionally or relationally, are weakened not only in the material sphere, but also in terms of the symbolism and identity on which they rely.

But whatever social situation they are in, parents are rarely bereft of values and are generally aware of the risks their children face (under-achievement at school, drug addiction, petty crime, unemployment, racism, etc). With the means at their disposal and their understanding of these problems, they constantly strive to avoid such pitfalls, although their environment often tends to exclude and discriminate against their children. Often too caught up in their own struggle for basic well-being, however, they cannot always find an appropriate response to their children's various needs.

2.6 From Poor Parenting to Social Risks for Children

Parental control

Adults whose position as parents is not bolstered by their social status find it more difficult to exert authority. If they also enjoy little recognition or esteem from the other persons with responsibility for and authority over their children (teachers and social workers), their chances of earning respect as parents shrink further. This may make them resort to either authoritarianism, in which case they are perceived as using violence or meting out ill-treatment, or a passivity interpreted as an abdication of responsibility.

A study carried out in France has revealed another type of problem. Based on research from various countries and disciplines, it found links between family functioning and crime.

According to the author who conducted the study (reference):
- Families from the most disadvantaged sectors of society are over-represented in those with children who become involved in crime. While some parents at every level fail to bring up their children properly and supervise them, it is clear that successful integration into the world of work, stable financial resources, self-confidence and social recognition make it easier to cope with emotional and behavioural disorders. In contrast, job insecurity, lack of income and dependence on social services give rise to feelings of worthlessness, shame, impotence and injustice, accompanied by a decline in legitimacy and, ultimately, a loss of control regarded by many as an abdication of responsibility.
- There is no link between family situation (separation of parents, lone-parent families, reconstituted families) and children's delinquent conduct, although children's situations may cause them suffering, anxiety and uncertainty. We know

that separation entails a drop in standard of living, a decline in financial resources and sometimes a loss of relationships (the spouse's network of relationships), with a resulting increase in vulnerability. It is because they come from the disadvantaged sectors of society that children in some families start to offend, but this is not attributable to a separation or family reconstitution.

- In the huge majority of cases, the family's role is only indirect when a child starts to break the law. It is in practice the parents' capacity to control their children that is of relevance when pre-adolescents first step out of line. At that stage, it is important for parents not to loosen their grip, so that there is no risk of the offending getting worse or of their children dropping out of school. Parents are usually aware of the risks at this stage and attempt to deal with the situation. Yet some families are unable to keep control. According to the author, when families fail it is because forces outside their control have prevailed. In his view, it is in most cases socio-economic factors which in fact prove decisive where offending is concerned, albeit indirectly so, doing much to destroy the parents' ability to keep control.

Parents regard their control function as requiring them effectively to keep an eye on their child, to spot and condemn each example of deviant behaviour, and punish these appropriately in a way that the child can internalise. The parent therefore needs to be clear-sighted and self-confident, while the child must show trust and recognition. A prerequisite of proper control is good communication and a strong attachment between parents and their children, two factors which actually tend to reinforce one another.

Poor parental control accordingly stems from a weak inter-relationship, and the parents' attitude is shaped by their own personal well-being. As we know, the stress arising out of vulnerability generally weakens relations and communication throughout the family. As a result parental control diminishes and one of two extreme reactions often ensues: abdication (letting the child do as he or she pleases) or authoritarianism (violence is used).

2.7 Help with School Work to Ensure Success

The more problematic families' social conditions are, the greater the difficulty parents experience in providing support for their children's schooling. Although some of the parents concerned successfully offer such support, many provide little effective support in practice. And they are in any case less capable of approaching the school to good effect if their children are in difficulty. Consequently failure becomes more likely, and a feeling grows that it will be impossible to escape from the web of under-achievement at school and vulnerability.

2.8 Family Memories as an Educational Resource

The family's origins are recognised through memory, a kind of back-up to the family tree harking back to a social attachment characterised by not only biological and legal relationships, but also social and symbolic ones.

We know that vulnerable families do not have the resources which enable the middle and upper classes to ensure that their children succeed in society. They lack financial, cultural and relational capital, and this is all the more true of families which have moved away from their country of origin.

In such situations, children are generally trapped in two different ways:
- they come from a family suffering exclusion,
- they are caught up in their family history, without any say in their own fate.

Families which manage to find the necessary resources to bring up their children despite their weakened social situation display not only moral qualities such as bravery, tenacity and courage, but also an ability to communicate, to inter-relate, and to find and use information. They also show that they have thought about, accepted responsibility for and assimilated all their experience, which their children will be able to use as a resource in spite of their highly unfavourable starting point.

3.

SUPPORTING PARENTING IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

(drafted by Mona Sandbaek)

This chapter gives an overview of some of the most common family policy measures put in place to secure family functioning and level of living. It then moves on to explore the insights available on parenting support services and programmes.

In order to design relevant family policy and support services, it is necessary to have accurate information about the processes that are taking place. It is however, also important to reflect upon the attitudes taken towards the changes that are taking place. Whether everything is seen as becoming worse or the changes are viewed as carrying with them some positive aspects is likely to influence the kind of family policy or support programmes that are recommended. Such attitudes may also influence the position taken towards the people that the various support programmes attempt to help. Policy makers as well as professionals need to be aware of the changing nature of historical constructions of families and childhood and their impliciations for assessments and services (Seden 2006).

3.1 Introductory Notes on Determinants of Parenting and Family Support Measures
As underlined earlier, parenting is influenced by numerous structural and political factors, as well as ideological changes in views on families and childhood. The present report takes the child's rights and needs as the point of departure. The figure below provides a useful overview of the apprach that informs this report, combining a developmental and ecological perspective in illustrating how different factors influence the child, and also the parenting of the child.

Figure 3.1.
To be inserted

Source: Aldgate et al (2006), based on Jones and Ramchandani (1999).

The terminology used to describe the various family support measures vaies. Rostgaard (2004) uses the term 'family support policy' when she outlines changes in family support systems through a comparison of former and existing policies in Central and Eastern Europe since the start of the transition. Gudbrandsson (2005) applies the term 'primary prevention' to refer to strategies and programmes which aim to avoid significant harm before it occurs. In relation to family support this includes the fundamental structures of the welfare society like health, education, social security and housing. In addition the universe of family policy is completed by a range of provisions and services that address particular needs of families and children.

Krieger (2004) claims that even though the family is important, family policies have a low status in many countries relative to other policy domains. Policies concerning family life have tended to be addressed indirectly rather than directly, due to a lack of consensus about the legitimacy of policy intervention in family life (Hantrais 2004a; Gudbrandsson 2005). However, family policy has been on the agenda since the Council of Europe's first Conference of Ministers Responsible for Family Affairs, held in Vienna in 1959. Family policy measures in Europe attempt to address the determinants of parenting, albeit to different degrees and not always in a coherent and coordinated manner (Gudbrandsson 2005). In the following we will give a brief overview of family support in terms of family policy measures, before moving on to a more extended presentation of family support services and programmes.

3.2 Supporting Parents through Family Policy Measures
The political and welfare systems and the level of support vary widely among European countries, but some constituents seem to be fairly common and firmly established on the social policy landscape (Council of Europe 2005a; Rostgaard 2004[7]; Krieger 2005).

3.2.1 Main Elements of Family Policy
Across the member states there are three core elemnts of family policy measures.

Public transfers and taxation are important elements in order to secure the living standards of families with children and enhance social security. Child benefits or family allowances are the primary form of such transfers, existing in almost all countries, although they are universal in some countries and means-tested in others. The generosity of the general allowances vary, but in a country like Hungary where the allowances are generous, it has been indicated that without the allowances the child poverty rate would rise from 14% to 22% (UNICEF 2001, cited in Rostgaard 2004: 18). In recent years, growing attention has been paid to the necessity of combating poverty in general and child poverty in particular (Chen and Corak 2005; Corak 2005; Sutherland 2005). There has also been an increasing interest in exploring the experience of poverty seen from children's own perspectives (Daly and Leonard 2002; Ridge 2002,,2006; van der Hoek 2005; Sandbaek 2006). In their reports to the Conference of Family Ministers 2006 (Council of Europe 2005a), several countries mention special measures that they have in place to reduce child poverty, Actions taken in order to improve the situation of single mothers are often seen as a part of fighting child poverty.

Work-family balance is another common focus of family policy. For this purpose, a number of measures are being put into practice, such as flexible working hours and part time work, paid parental leaves and allowances and the right to take time off when children or other family members are ill. Some countries have also introduced a father's quota of leave – a period od family leave reserved soley for the father - in order to encourage fathers to participate more actively in the care of younger children.

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[7] Rostgard's report (2004): was funded by UNESCO. The analysis is based on comparing and contrasting 13 countries spanning different geographical regions and religions – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine

A <u>reliable infrastructure of child care provision</u> is a third axis of family policy. This includes not just services for the care of children but a concern with appropriate working hours to enable parents to reconcile work and family life. High quality day-care is also to an increasing degree seen as a way of ensuring children's well-being (Rostgaard 2004). In Recommendation (Rec (2002)8) the Council of Europe describes good quality child day-care as an important contribution to social cohesion, in so far as it serves to foster the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of all children and creates possibilities for children to make their opinions heard on matters concerning them. Day-care provisions vary within and across countries according to factors such as age group, administrative arrangements and educational approaches.

The measures just described are reported to have high priority in the member states. All countries describe several activities and planned projects in these areas. However, it is also obvious that the gap is still wide between what governments can offer and what families and children need in order to organise their everyday life in an appropriate way.

Paid work is important from many perspectives, but an ethic of paid work is not necessarily broad enough to meet people's wishes to care for their loved ones and to spend time with them. Williams (2004) argues that political principles of care are needed, alongside political principles of work. Care should not only be fitted in with the requirements of work but be seen as having value in itself. She argues that societies need to address fundamental questions such as what people need in order to provide proper care and support for close kin and friends and for themselves.

3.2.2 Supporting Parenting through Services
The family policy measures described so far aim at providing the necessary material conditions for families, such as preventing poverty and reconciling work and family life. There is also a need to support the qualitative aspects of parenting and for that purpose a set of services and programmes focusing on the content of the parental tasks are in place in many countries. In some however, particularly those undergoing transition, the development of policies aimed at supporting parents in their role as carers/educators of children is a relatively recent phenomenon driven by a mixture of social, economic and political factors, many of them inter-related (Council of Europe 2005b)[8].

The Council document on parenting and support for parenting (Council of Europe 2001)[9] summed up the state of the art at the end of the 20th century. Family support programmes were divided into two main categories, one targeting families where the parents have material, relational or psychological problems or problems with drug dependency and the other targeting families where the children are experiencing difficulties. In an overview of existing ways of supporting parents of children aged from 0 to 11 years, the document lists the following:

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[8] This is a document prepared for the Committee of Experts on Children and Families (CS-EF) (2005) The following member states contributed: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Switzerland.
[9] This report reflects the work of a group of experts to develop an overview of the current situation for parents in the member states of the Council of Europe. During a period of almost two years (from February 1997 to December 1998), the experts met three times in Strasbourg in order to prepare the report.

Main Forms of Provision Required for Families in the Member States

- Parental education;
- Pre-marital counselling for young couples (often run by churches), family planning;
- Preparation for childbirth (group courses offered by public and private medical and socio-medical services, clinics and hospitals, for pregnant women and their partners);
- Health promotion;
- TV and radio programmes;
- Sufficient day-care and after school facilities;
- Mother-child centres that seek to overcome isolation, mother and child welfare programmes, programmes for the parents of pre-school children, run by nursery schools and day-care centres;
- Information about physical and psychological health and development;
- Community networks, networks that links families, self-help groups, meetings, discussions with professionals;
- School, medical, social and psychological care;
- Regional programmes to support parents;
- Sufficient information on the provision of social services and economic support by the state;
- Adequate support for victims of family violence;
- All forms of counselling, especially for parents of adolescents;
- Co-operation with teachers as a preventive measure;
- Sex education (often provided at schools);
- Free-phone and other help lines that address specific parenting needs (in relation to illness, family violence, juvenile crime or addiction, for example) and offer information and consultation services - often free of charge - to children, young people and their parents;
- Programmes for parents of all children who are addicted (drugs, alcoholism, gambling, special programmes for youngsters who abuse alcohol and their parents);
- Programmes for families below the poverty-line and disadvantaged communities.

Some countries had all or a number of these services, while others had hardly any. The experts identified a general lack of educational programmes for parents and underlined the role of parents' associations (ibid).

On the basis of more recent evidence, especially the Compendium of national contributions to the Conference of Ministers of Family Affairs (Council of Europe 2005a and the report on Good Practices (Council of Europe 2005b), it is obvious that the

provision of family support services differs greatly between states. However, some general trends can be identified:

> "Slovenia has introduced a family support dimension to existing universal services for families, such as pre natal and post natal health services, parental involvement in child care and education programmes and statutory and non-statutory services to support parents, counselling and advice. The principal vehicles of parenting support in Slovenia are public services in the local and regional health, educational and social scheme, and programmes provided by voluntary organisations"... (Council of Europe 2005b: 25).

The quote reflects a development that seems to be taking place in many European countries. Health services seem to have high priority in all member states, but this will not be further explored in this chapter since its focus is on social services.

3.2.3 Recent Trends Across Member States as Regards Service Provision for Families
On the basis of the material provided by the member states, six main trends characterise the trajectory of development of services for families and children. The following are the most noteworthy general trends to be observed in recent years.

Main Trends in Services for Families and Children

- Local centres
- Educational programmes for parents
- Programmes to support children's education
- Services and programmes targeting populations at risk
- Child protection services
- Protecting children's rights

Local centres
A general trend seems to be to set up decentralised services and programmes at the local level, where the authorities are encouraged to work together with NGOs and humanitarian organisations. The services are often organised as centres, under a variety of names and administrative arrangements, most commonly under ministries dealing with social or family affairs, education or health. Collaboration between several ministers has often been established (e.g., Bulgaria, Ireland, Romania, Spain, Slovenia). The centres aim at combining prevention through information and advice, with counselling and treatment for families experiencing hardship.

The collaboration with NGOs is in accordance with the Council of Europe's Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion (2004) which calls for the development of a new ethic of shared social responsibility in which government, social partners, civil society, individuals and families all play their part in building a cohesive society. Practices vary on the ground, however. As demonstrated in the report from Home-Start (2005),[10]

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[10] A recent report (Home Start 2005a) presents results from a project to combat social exclusion among families with young children in Europe, co-Financed by Home-Start International and funded by the

working with an NGO was quite unusual in Hungary, while such initiatives are thriving in the UK.

The local centres offer a variety of services and programmes; among which the most common seem to be marriage or couple counselling, partly universal or preventive services to inform parents about good marital practices (e.g., Czech Republic and Norway). In a pioneering initiative, the Norwegian government has launched a programme named 'Godt samliv' (Feeling well as partners) for couples upon the birth of their first child. The purpose is to prevent the couple from breaking up. The programme is free of charge, and will by 2006 be given in all 433 Norwegian municipalities. Most of the marriage and couple counselling programmes target families with problems.

Other kinds of counselling focus on parenting in general, most commonly they offer advice and treatment aimed at dealing with specific difficulties for example with delinquent youth, children with ADHD or children with disabilities. Some of the services or programmes provide particular assistance for socially excluded families (e.g. Slovenia). Such services and programmes can be part of the local centres, but are also offered in different administrative settings and contexts.

Educational programmes for parents
A number of member states also mention various educational programmes for parents – for example during pregnancy (e.g., Austria) or at different stages in the child's development. Some programmes are called 'Schools for better parenting' (e.g., Croatia, Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, Romania).[11] Switzerland mentions having obtained good results from campaigns through the internet and movies.

Programmes to support children's education
It is also interesting to note what may be regarded as a fairly new trend, namely programmes or initiatives to support children's education in a variety of ways. They can be divided into three broad categories. First, programmes directed towards children themselves, to enhance their school performance, to prevent school drop out or address the situation when children have failed school (e.g., Switzerland). Second, there are programmes with parents as the target group. The aim of these initiatives is to enable parents to support their children's education. The programmes may have a broader focus, but the relationship between the child and the school is one of the main themes (e.g., Greece). A third category focuses on the cooperation between schools and parents (e.g., Switzerland). This development seems to reflect the increasing importance put on children's education and the recognition of the important role that parents play in this context, admitting that parents have different premises and resources to help their

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European Commission. The project explored the experiences and views of parents with very young children in Greece, Hungary, Ireland and the UK.

[11] As a reminder that the examples given do not provide exhaustive information about what is going on in the member states, in the UK alone several parent support and education programmes exist. These include Mellow Parenting, Newpin, OnePlusOne, PIPPIN, the Parent Adviser Scheme, the 'Spokes Project: Support Parents on Kids' Education. The information can be downloaded from individual programme websites but is also available at http//www.ukchildcare.ca/practice (Barrett 2003: 214).

children. Non-violent upbringing of children is part of many programmes. Greece mentions that all counsellors are trained together and use the same material. The selection process gives priority to remote and needy areas.

Services and programmes targeting populations at risk
Several countries mention measures for particular groups of parents and children, for example health services or educational support for Roma children. There seems to be an agreement that poor education and insufficient health services are among the major disadvantages suffered by many children from Roma and Gypsies communities (e.g., Bulgaria and Greece). In the report from Slovenia, the necessity of raising their self-esteem and integrating them into society is also mentioned (Council of Europe 2005b).

Special attention is also put on health and educational services for migrant children, with language training as an important ingredient, often education in their first language as well as the language of their country of residence (e.g. Switzerland). In Belgium "The bridging class" programme offers a possibility for immigrant children to study the French language as long as they need it in order to the able to attend lessons within the ordinary school system (Council of Europe 2005a). Some countries also offer tailored support to multi-member families. In Croatia there are special programmes for this category including counselling and training both for parents and children (ibid).

Child protection services
A fundamental factor in the implementation of secondary and teritary prevention is the existence of a public child protection system, which is responsible for administering the appropriate intervention. According to Gudbrandsson (2005) positive developments are taking place in the transition countries. Examples include Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania and Georgia, all of which have stabilised child protectin services at the local level coupled with a state agency for coordination and monitoring of services. Serbia–Montenegro is also in the process of developing a system of protection of children from abuse and neglect. A common obstacle for most of the states in transition is the lack of a tradition of local government mangagment and administration.

Protecting children's rights
In order to safeguard children's rights, several countries have established an Office of Children's Ombudsman. Although the models applied vary, some of the main functions of the Ombudsman are to promote the rights and welfare of children and to examine and investigate complaints against public bodies, schools and voluntary organisations (e.g. Ireland). Other similar institutions have also been set up. In Poland a Commissioner of the Rights of Children has been established. In 1998 Denmark founded the Children's Council which has as its main goals to secure children's rights and emphasise children's conditions in the community (Council of Europe 2005a).

> ## Some Examples of Good Practice in Current Provision
>
> - A Committee on Special Youth Support in Belgium provides assistance and support on a voluntary or negotiated basis. In court cases, the children's judge decides what is the best solution for the young person and their family. The social services advise the Youth Court, prepare the Court's decisions based on a social welfare investigation, arranges support and ensures that it is of a high standard (Council of Europe 2005a).
> - Among the most important measures for supporting families and children at risk are provision of pedagogic, psychological and legal aid to parents and to persons entrusted with parental authority and functions concerning child rearing, upbringing and educational issues. This practice is widespread in Bulgaria. Referrals to other services and provisions of consultation are part of the offers (Council of Europe 2005b: 6).
> - In Croatia, a programme of training for non-violence, **'I Choose Tolerance'**, aims at preventing violent behaviour among children and youth, empowering and supporting children and youth in non-violent resolution of conflicts, teaching children and parents about culture of dialogue and tolerance, informing children about their rights and instruments and institutions which provide support, and active participation of local community, general public and institutions into combating all forms of violence" (Council of Europe 2005a: 31).
> - 'Bread and Chocolate' is a centre for families and children in Italy. The underlying idea is to create a place for children to socialise and play and make a space for families to meet and discuss issues. Parents who do not use other municipal services are a particular target group. The project is strongly rooted in the local community and draw upon community resources (Council of Europe 2005b: 18).
> - 'Triple P' (Positive Parenting Programme, face-to-face training for parents), launched in 2001 in Switzerland. Initial findings from an extensive review show a substantial reduction in problematic behaviour in children and a positive impact on parenting and on the quality of couples' relationships and their personal well-being (Council of Europe 2005b: 28.).

Numerous other examples could have been included if space permitted. The original report (Council of Europe 2005b) should be consulted for other examples.

It is important to underline that even if the previous paragraphs have described a variety of measures for the support of families, this does not by any means indicate that the needs that parents themselves feel are met. On the contrary, the process of ascertaining the needs of parents has just started and requires more political attention and priority. In terms of the demands for support, parents across Europe express the need for various types of support in their parenting role. For example, this was one of the most widely-voiced needs to come from a public consultation in Ireland with almost 1,000 people (Daly 2004). In a similar vein, a study of 384 parents from two-parent families and 317 parents from one-parent families in Croatia demonstrated that a significant part of

the need for formal and semi-formal support remains unsatisfied in both types of families (i.e., need for the psychological counselling support regarding upbringing, legal counselling and information, and one-time financial assistance from welfare system) (Pećnik and Raboteg-Šarić 2005).

3.3 A Theoretical Framework for Family Support Services and Programmes

Family support programmes represent a broad array of concepts and activities. They draw on ideas from various contexts of intervention and associated academic fields of enquiry The integrative nature of family support theory and practice offers an opportunity to use a range of approaches in work with children and their families (Canavan 2000). Not only do the support programmes utilise a variety of theoretical approaches but they apply a range of practical strategies. Some of the most common are behavioural, humanistic or psychodynamic approaches, social learning theory, multi-systemic therapy or different therapeutic approaches like functional family or rational emotive therapy. Attachment theory-based approaches and other theories drawn from work on child development are also quite widespread (Barrett 2003). Seden (2006) identifies psychodynamic theory and learning theory as the most common theoretical frameworks. Programmes can also be categorised according to the kind of intervention they represent, like crisis intervention, task-centred work, family therapy and strength and solution-focused approaches. While Barrett (2003) and Seden (2006) describe the approaches in detail, we will focus on an emerging paradigm for working with children and their families.

Two Core Principles for Programmes Supporting Parenting

- Focus on protective factors as well as risk factors
- Treat parents and children as agents in their own lives

3.3.1 Risk and Protective Factors

Research and support programmes for families have traditionally focused on problems and risk factors. This is well illustrated in Barret's (2003) interesting discussion of concepts. She demonstrates how the terminology has moved from an earlier concept of 'dysfunctional families', through to 'risky families', 'vulnerable or fragile families' to the present concept of 'families at risk', which is likely to be neither the final nor optimal concept. With reference to research on poverty, Barrett underlines that although chronic poverty does increase the likelihood of more health, socio-emotional and behavioural problems, as well as lower educational attainment and poorer quality relationships with parents, not all children growing up in poor families will experience negative outcomes. The effects of adverse circumstances operate within chains of cumulative risks and protective factors. Research has shown a curvilinear relationship between number of risk factors and the chances of negative outcomes, particularly when the number of risk factors is more than four. However, it is also necessary to take into consideration the set of protective factors in order to understand a child's development. This framework is

increasingly more common in poverty research all over the world (see for example Seecombe's analysis from the US (2000, 2002), German studies on the consequences for children of growing up in poverty (Holz and Skodula 2003; Chasse, Zander and Rasch 2003) and Ghate and Hazel's (2002) study of parenting in poor circumstances in the UK).

The change from an almost exclusive focus on risk to also include protective factors in the analysis of children's development has taken place over some decades and has several roots. Antonovsky's work (1979, 1987, 1996) has shed light on the factors contributing to the development of people and relationships that are healthy and well-balanced. In 1978 he formulated the concept 'Salutogense' to refer to health promoting factors as opposed to pathogenesis, factors that cause illness. In his model 'sense of coherence' was seen as essential, consisting of three elements: people must understand the situation, they must believe that it is possible to find solutions and they must find meaning in trying to apply the solutions. Antonovsky developed an instrument to measure people's sense of coherence that has been applied in several countries. Antonovsky's model has much in common with the factors that Rutter (1985) associates with resilience: a sense of self-esteem and confidence, a belief in self efficacy and ability to deal with change and adaptation. The idea of resilience suggests that children can reach optimal potential even under stressful circumstances.

Within the realm of family and child research, Werner and Smith's (1977, 1982, 1992) survey from Kauai is a classic. They conducted a prospective study, where all children born on Kauai in 1955 were followed up at the ages of 1, 10 and 18 years. A follow-up was conducted when they were in the beginning of their thirties. Due to economic and culturally difficult conditions, and a high proportion of social and emotional problems, the cohort was described as vulnerable. In spite of this, the research showed that at least one-third of the children were rather resilient and doing well. The findings from the study drew attention to factors that contributed to positive development in children born under adverse circumstances.

The approach of studying not only risk but also protective factors has been adopted in numerous contexts, in particular within family support programmes. Seden (2006: 48) speaks of strength and solution-focused approaches which seek to identify possibilities rather than problems, to build on existing successful coping strategies and to define realistic goals. Barrett (2003) presents a model that sums up the status of this research and support paradigm, mapping carefully risk as well as protective factors. This is presented in Figure 3.2 below.

According to Barrett (2003) policy makers and professionals have embraced the need for strategies which attempt to reduce the impact of risk factors and increase the likelihood that protective factors will come into play. Several North American programmes demonstrate the approach, for example the Strengthening Families Project, the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families programme and the Australian Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. The target is to help families and communities "to build resilience and capacity to deal with problems before they develop (Emerson 2000, quoted in Barrett 2003: 25).

Figure 3.2 Overview of Risk and Protective Factors

Major risk factors at birth	**Protective factors (within child)**
Chronic poverty Mothers with little education Moderate-to-severe perinatal complications Low birth weight Developmental delays or irregularities Generic abnormalities Parental psychopathology/pathology/criminality Parents' family upbringing Intellectual ability/disability Difficult temperament	Birth order (first) Central nervous system integrity, good physical health Positive self concept Responsiveness to people Good-natured, affectionate Positive social orientation, good social skills Good problem-solving skills Good relationship with one parent Free of distressing habits (e.g. tantrums, poor feeding or sleeping) Advanced self-help skills High IQ High activity (though not over-active) Special interests and hobbies, or talents Desire to improve self, achievement motivation Age-appropriate sensorimotor and perceptual skills
Additional risk factors (within child) Being male Attention/concentration problems Excessive risk-taking Lack of self control/impulsivity Early onset of violent/aggressive behaviour **Additional Risk factors (within environment)** Community disorganisation High crime rate Opportunities to offend (e.g. easy availability of drugs) Low parental supervision Hash and inconsistent parental discipline Delinquent peer group in adolescence	 **Protective factors (within environment)** Four or fewer children spaced two or more years apart A lot of attention paid to infant in first year Positive parent-child relationship in early childhood Additional caretakers besides mother Care by siblings and grandparents Wider network of social support (wide family/community) Good relationship with school Mother has some steady employment outside the home Access to special services (health/education/social services) Structures and rules in household Close, supportive peer relationships with non-delinquent peers Religion
Major sources of stress during childhood (potential triggers) Prolonged separation from primary caretaker in first year Birth of younger siblings within first 2 years of first/index child Serious or repeated childhood illnesses Parental illness/mental illness Parental alcoholism/drug abuse Sibling with handicap or learning/behaviour problem Chronic family discord/conflict/violence Divorce/separation of parents Father absence Re-marriage and entry of step-parent Change of residence; foster home placement Loss of job or sporadic employment of parents Death of older sibling or close friend Teenage pregnancy	

Source: Barrett 2003: 20-23 (Tables 2,1, 2.2 and 2.3).

Home-Start is another family support programme that draws attention to the buffering nature of protective factors, in particular social support for parents. In a report on research carried out in the UK, Greece, Hungary and Ireland (2005a), it is argued that in addition to sufficient income and adequate purchasing power, the nature and quality of personal and community relationships are protective factors for preventing exclusion and retaining mental health. The participants in the study identified the following as protective factors: family support (Greece, Hungary, Ireland); social support (England and Wales, Greece, Hungary, Ireland); educational and personal skills (Greece, Ireland); optimistic personality, inner strength and motivation (Greece, Ireland); desire to do best for and the bond established with the children (all nations); good couple relationship (England and Wales, Greece, Hungary and Ireland, and Home-Start itself (Ireland and Hungary). Other forms of social support were also mentioned by the parents.

Along the same lines, Gilligan (2000) advocates that a family support perspective should be less concerned with searching for deficits, pathology and risk and more inclined to find and value strengths. He discusses protective factors as social capital. The challenge for family support is to build up the family's and children's stock of social capital, in their interpersonal relationships as well as in the communities where they live. Attachment theory underlines the importance of stable attachments for the child. Family support must aim at strengthening this sense of a secure base, preferably within the child's family and home, but if this is not possible, the children must be offered the necessary secure base outside of their biological homes.

3.3.2 Help-seeking People as Agents in their own Lives
Another aspect that should be taken into consideration when designing support for parents is the changing paradigms of welfare and attitudes towards receivers of support. Williams, Popay and Oakley (1999) describe a shift away from seeing people as passive beneficiaries of welfare and as one-dimensional social categories of 'poor', 'single mothers', 'disabled person' and so forth towards perspectives emphasising that help-seeking people also have the capacity to be reflexive human beings and to be active agents in their own lives as well as in welfare policies. These perspectives are shared by other authors such as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and Thoits (1995). The changing view of people as victims to one which enables them to manage their lives in spite of a difficult starting point or difficult life circumstances has led to increased attention being devoted to the importance of coping and social support. Williams, Popay and Oakley (1999) underline that views of people as actors must be taken into consideration along with traditional 'old' welfare concerns like structural constraints and inequality limiting people's opportunities and choices. Of course, the importance of people's material living conditions must not be forgotten.

A view of people as agents in their own lives is becoming more widespread and accepted and is reflected in practice as well as in research. Home-Start (2005a,b), as mentioned, focused research on the experiences and views of parents with very young children in Greece, Hungary, Ireland and the UK. The families faced different challenges in their lives, such as being disabled or having a child with a disability, being on their own as

'single parents' and being immigrant. The researchers used an approach which involved qualitative analysis and listened to what the families had to say. The ideas and conclusions presented in the report are all drawn from the families' own experiences. As will be illustrated later in this chapter, several research projects on how different kinds of family support programmes function follow a similar model and are committed to asking the parents themselves what they feel works for them.

3.4 Provision of Support for Parents[12]

3.4.1 The Aim of Support

Parenting is a comprehensive task, not easily limited and defined. The first chapter of this report outlined the core elements of parenting. Before drawing up some core elements of what supporting parents may imply, it is important to underline the complexity involved. It must not be forgotten that support involves both a giver and a receiver. Being supported requires a lot of activity on the part of parents (Quinton 2004).

According to Quinton (2004) the term implies an action that makes a difference for the better. The underlying assumption is that support should reduce problems or make it easier for parents to cope. However, when looked at more closely, this is not so obvious or easy to achieve. It is not always evident, for example, what kind of help would best solve the problems that parents and children face. It is often difficult to decide the roots of the problems as well as what would actually relieve the pressure. Furthermore, it is quite complex to determine if support is beneficial to parenting. This may be evaluated according to different criteria such as if support makes parenting more enjoyable and manageable, if it is reflected in children's development or if it makes an impact on issues and problems in parenting behaviour itself. Quinton's comments can be seen as a warning not to simplify the task of supporting parents and a reminder to watch carefully whether programmes function according to the intentions.

Gilligan (2000) defines family support as being about mobilising support for children's normal development, often in adverse circumstances. This mobilisation should take place in all the contexts where children live: family, school, peer group and leisure activities and enhance their feelings of belonging to these arenas. It is reasonable to identify as an aim for family support the strengthening of the qualities in families that have prooved to be particularly important. Research suggests that resilient families are more stable and cohesive, cope with stress and change by being flexible, have clearly agreed routines and communicate well (McCubbin and McCubbin 1988, quoted in Barrett 2003: 24). Based upon studies in 27 countries, another group of researchers (Stinnett and DeFrain 1985, quoted in Barrett 2003: 25) identified six qualities which contribute to family strength:
- commitment to the family;
- appreciation of and affection for each other;
- positive interaction and good communication;

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[12] There is a variety of programmes and initiatives aiming at supporting parents. This section does not aim at doing justice to the specificity and diversity of these different programmes but seeks to identify some core elements and concepts that seem to be important across the different approaches.

- enjoyment of each other's company;
- a sense of spiritual wellbeing and shared values;
- experience of and confidence in being able to manage difficulties.

A programme for families at risk in Portugal (Calheiros et al 2005) identifies goals for the family context, the parental relationships and parental skills as well as for the child's social relations. The main goals can be summed up in the keywords to support the family to maintain, structure and organise their living space in accordance with the needs of the child, refer families to the adequate services and local support systems, to provide the parents with information relative to the developmental stage of the child with regard to the child's needs and how to develop autonomy, as well as to provide the parents with strategies to stimulate and supervise their children in a adequate ways. The programme further aims at enhancing the interpersonal relationships of the children with peers and adults and to promote the child's self-confidence and skills.

Several authors (Gilligan 2000; Gudbrandsson 2005; Seden 2006) emphasise that the main task of family support is to empower the family to fulfil its basic role in the upbringing of children and enable parents to provide proper care for their offspring. Simultaneously it is necessary to ensure that the home environments are safe enough and that the children are not left in a situation of maltreatment or danger of significant harm. If the family fails to fulfil its functions, it is necessary to intervene in a manner that is as supportive as possible in order to enhance the best interests of the child and the further contact between the child and the parents. It is important to underline that some parents are not able to care adequately for their children, and that for some children it is not safe or healthy to remain at home. Such situations require special attention but are not the topic of this chapter, since they fall under what is considered as child protection.

3.4.2 Defining Support

Support is a general term that needs to be defined. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective on human development is relevant in this context. As described in Moran et al (2004: 19), it sees the factors that impinge on parents and children as nesting together within a hierarchy of four levels: socio-cultural ('macro system'); community ('eco system'); family ('micro system') and individual ('ontogenic'). These levels also describe a pathway of influence moving from the distal (social and community factors) to the more proximal (family and individual) factors. These authors point out that most services address aspects of parenting support at the proximal level when it is in distal factors that the roots of disadvantage lie.

It is common to divide up support in terms of to whom it is delivered and where parents might look for it. Services are usually referred to as 'formal support' while support from family or friends is characterised as 'informal support'. The latter type of support often rests on a sense of responsibility and reciprocity, while formal support is based on laws and regulations. Community groups or organisations often sit in the middle of this classification and their support is called 'semi-formal'. An alternative to the categorisation of sources of support is to classify according to the kind of support

provided, like for example emotional support or comfort, advice, practical help, resources or special services (Quinton 2004).

Gilligan (2000) divides formal family support into three categories. The first is 'developmental family support' which seeks to strengthen the coping capacities of children and adults in the context of their families and neighbourhoods. As examples of this kind of family support he mentions personal development groups, recreational projects, youth programmes, parent or other relevant adult education. He recommends that programmes should not be problem focused and in principle open to all. 'Compensatory family support' is the second category. It seeks to compensate family members for the disabling effects of disadvantage or adversity in their current or earlier life. High-quality day nursery programmes for prescchoolers from disadvantaged home circumstances, special youth programmes for those at risk in communities with high rates of truancy and early school leaving are examples of compensatory familay support. Gilligan (2000) calls the third category 'protective family support'. It seeks to strengthen the coping and resilience of children and adults in relation to identified risks or threats. Examples include day fostering for the children of drug-abusing parents, refuges and support groups for women suffering domestic violence, programmes in child behaviour management for parents, raising the self-esteem and social skills of young people exposed to abuse or bullying.

Home-Start International (2005a) gives examples of how different kinds of support may supplement or even be a precondition for one another. In their research, they found that many parents were reluctant to approach the social services for a variety of reasons, like independence, shame or bad experiences with indifferent or unfriendly staff or those who were felt to fail to treat parents with respect. Practical difficulties like lack of information, transport or social skills required to behave according to the professionals' expectations added to the reluctance of parents. Hoverever, once they had been helped in their own homes, their coping strategies, parenting skills and social networks improved and they were more willing to contact other services and participate in social activites, even to take up education. The Home-Start report reaches the conclusion that some parents need undemanding social support as a first step to seeking help. One father expressed this quite clearly (Home-Start 2005a: 56):

> "I didn't need social services, or the health visitor, never mind how nice she was. It needs other people, like you and me, to say "I had that problem" – I found that was easier – and not to judge you, just be there for you'".

The quote is a reminder that some parents profit from talking with other people that are or have been in a similar situation. Help does not necessarily have to be bi-lateral or provided by professionals. Different kinds of groups, not least self-help groups, can also be very useful. The above father's message shows that 'ordinary' people are able to share their experiences in ways that can be helpful to others. The fact that people can have multiple roles, and not only be on the receiving end, can be of value in itself. This finding was also confirmed in the research by Williams (2003, 2004) on self-help groups. Her experience was that bringing small groups of parents together enabled them to share

positive and negative experiences and provide mutual support. She emphasises the importance of linking such basic services to others which provide more specialist and detailed help when required.

All of this underlines the necessity of having different services and of seeing them in relation to each other, like a chain, and not as separated entities. This will be discussed further in the paragraph below concerning integrated community-based services.

3.5 Key Elements of Parenting Support Programmes

Based on a nationally representative survey in the UK of parents living in especially poor circumstances, Ghate and Hazel (2002) assess the formal as well as informal help that parents receive. They further show what service-users think of the resources that they receive and how policy and practice in family support services could be improved. These authors explored the role of social support in parenting in its broadest sense, based on the following definition of support derived from Thomson (1995, quoted in Ghate and Hazel 2002: 106/107):

> "Social support consists of social relationships that provide (or potentially provide) material and interpersonal resources that are of value to the recipient, such as counselling, access to information and services, sharing of tasks and responsibilities, and skill acquisition".

The definition captures the two dimensions of social support – practical or instrumental and emotional - and underlines that, whatever its type, relationships between individuals lie at the heart of support. Meaningful analyses of support must focus on both aspects. The importance of the latter point becomes very clear in the parents' evaluation of the help that they receive. They emphasise that they want services that allow them to feel 'in control'. There is a strong fear of loss of autonomy among parents, and they value being listened to and respected, as persons as well as for the experience they bring with them. There is a need to take the time to listen and engage seriously with parents' concerns, also because parents want and value services that meet their self-defined needs. Help that is well meant but irrelevant to the actual needs did not seem to be appreciated. The services offered sometimes seem to reflect what is available rather than what is needed, and do not always match well with parents' own agenda. Parents also expressed their needs for services that extended the service hours and reduced waiting lists or waiting times.

To convey the message that support may not always be a good thing for parents, Ghate and Hazel (2002) introduce the concept of 'negative support'. This is meant to reflect the fine line between help and interference and losing control over one's life and one's children which was perceived by parents to be a possible consequence of receiving support. The fear of losing privacy was another concern voiced, as were concerns relating to reciprocity and indebtedness. Highlighting such issues contributes to understanding why the neediest parents were more reluctant to accept support.

The elements that Ghate and Hazel (2002) extract as important in support accord to an almost surprising degree with the lessons drawn from other recent research. We now elaborate further on the elements that seem to be highlighted most frequently.

Positive Principles for Programmes of Support for Parents

- Non-judgmental and non-stigmatising orientation
- A bottom-up approach
- Multi-focused and flexible services
- Integrated, community based services
- Inclusive of the experience of minority and ethnic groups.

3.5.1 Positive Principles for Programmes of Support for Parents
A non-judgmental and non-stigmatising orientation
According to Williams (2004) family support has often been targeted on particular problems, such as so-called 'problem parents' or young offenders. This has generated a sense of stigma associated with using family support services and a degree of mistrust based on a fear that the state has the power to take one's children away, combined with a sense of devaluation of the efforts that many parents make. Research show that parents *want* access to support, but, along with Ghate and Hazel (2002), she underlines that it has to be the right kind. There is also a wrong sort of help that can be damaging to people's self-esteem and their capacity for involvement with others. Based upon research that explored the support provided by self-help groups in the community, Williams (2003, 2004) draws the conclusion that parents themselves define the right kind of support to be non-judgemental and non-stigmatising, promoting values like trust, reciprocity, informality and mutual respect and encompasses the diversity of parenting and partnering experiences. This is very much in line with the conclusions in the report from Home-Start (2005b: 24/25), captured in the following quote:

> "A genuine attitude of trust, empathy and respect must be communicated. The approach must be non-judgemental and accentuates the positive rather than dwelling on what needs to change, to enable parents' trust to grow and to see that the help offered is desirable and beneficial".

According to Home-Start (2005a) the theme of friendship permeated the accounts from all countries. Positive relationships founded on trust, friendship and encouragement appeared to lie at the root of parents gaining sufficient confidence to move forward. The importance of the nature of the relationship is very much linked with what others have found, for example ATD Fourth World (2004).

A bottom-upapproach

From listening to the participants in self-help groups, Williams (2004) concluded that parents did not only want to be seen as receivers of information but also as providers of expertise and new knowledge based upon their experiences of living through a wide variety of difficult situations, like having a child with educational or behavioural difficulties or drug dependency, being a single parent or a parent in situations of divorce or separation or domestic violence. As a consequence of estimating their own knowledge parents wanted to have a say in developing the services that they were looking for. She found that there is a need for knowledge of what does matter and seems proper to parents who find themselves in difficult situations, and that people who have experienced the difficulties themselves are likely to contribute to develop this kind of knowledge.

The Home-Start organisation (2005a) also advises services to exercise a much greater willingness to engage with and listen to families. In its view hearing what families say and build this into approaches to assist them can be the key to better outcomes. This implies multiple rather than single standard, which may be easier from the service-providers' point of view and more compatible with evaluation expectations.

To achieve greater understanding of relationships between individual families and the wider society within which they exist, there may also be a need for a fundamental shift in perspective, away from 'top-down' homogenised prescriptions (though some of these may also be useful for some families) and towards more "'bottom-up' heterogeneous and culturally-responsive formula" (Barrett 2003: 202). Barrett adds that evaluation reports show that parenting programmes must ensure that they do not stigmatise or create dependency and last long enough for changes to be sustained.

Multi-focused and flexible services

Research encourages services to be multi-focused and flexible from different starting points. The Home-Start report (2005a) underlines that policies and services for families should be more responsive and flexible than they usually are. With a few exceptions programmes do not take proper account of the uniqueness of each family. The fact that each family is special requires that the responses should be unique as well. One of the chief messages from this research is the need to recognise the diversity of needs that exist and find creative ways of responding to every family's particular circumstances. This can be contradictory to mainstreaming services, or focusing only on a minor part of the family's problems or situations. Home-Start adds the concept of 'flexibility' as another key message. Flexibility should ensure that policies are robust enough to adjust to the family's needs but also to allow for local variation. Sufficient flexibility is also a requirement in order to encompass minority groups.

Gilligan (2000) emphasizes the complexity of families' problems, rather than their uniqueness, when he argues for family support programmes to be multi-faceted and integrated. The complexity of the stresses and difficulties that many families are facing means that multiple solutions may be needed to tackle their problems. Gilligan recommends tailored responses, not unlike the American concept of a 'wraparound service'. He draws attention to mobilising the potential of schools and the education

systems in order to offer integrated services, and argues for the involvement of men in the problem-solving processes.

Barrett (2003) also underlines the importance of multi-focused approaches but from a perspective of timing. According to her multi-focused approaches are particularly important when it comes to later interventions. Early identification can be effective, but there are still some difficulties involved in accurate early identification and they may also lead to a sense of stigmatisation. Research suggests that, in order to be effective, later interventions need to be even more multi-focused, flexible, adaptable and non-stigmatising than their earlier counterparts.

Integrated community based services
The emphasis which those taking part in the research put on the need for services to be multi-focused is followed by an urge to ensure a proper co-ordination of services. Many service-users have experienced the lack of coordination and have felt shunted around from consultation to consultation, asked to come again and again, without being properly informed about what is actually required and what is going on (Sandbaek 2002; Home-Start 2005a: 36).

One strong reason for co-ordinated services is to take into consideration that children as well as parents are whole human beings. According to Aldgate (2006) parents are often aware of the complexity of children's developmental needs. They want professionals to see their child as a whole and would like services to work together. Gudbrandsson (2005) also underlines that each child should be considered as an entity. In order to achieve this, services must avoid a compartmentalised approach.

Another reason to strive for co-ordination is that intervention in one area may alter other aspects of the family's life as well as influence other interventions. Holistic thinking and the ability to consider possible outcomes across various areas before intervening is required (Aldgate 2006). Professionals who deal with the many aspects of the child's personality should endeavour to work in a complementary manner on the basis of a joint strategy and its constant readjustment, and ensure that their work is coherent in order to counteract the feeling of fragmentation (Gudbrandsson 2005).

Efficacy is also an argument to enhance co-ordination. Research seems to conclude that the most effective strategy would be to ensure that agencies collaborate so well that they can create meeting-points at the locations that parents tend to use, like health clinic, day care centre, school, doctors' surgeries. This seems to be particularly effective for reaching normally hard-to-reach target groups. The importance of universal infrastructural provision has also been underlined, especially for childcare, after-school care, transport and counselling. Participants have expressed their wish to have their needs met within such provision (Newell 2005).

The participants in the self-help groups researched by Williams (2004) and her colleagues also emphasised the importance of universal infrastructures, especially for child care, after-school care, transport and counselling. It was within such provision, rather than

outside it, that they wanted their specific needs to be met. She adds that greater emphasis needs to be given to strategies to build stronger local communities and local democracy.

Inclusive of the experience of minority and ethnic groups
Evaluation of parenting programmes in the UK shows a lack of involvement of minority ethnic groups. This may call for creating special support services, but this approach is not without problems. Targeted measures may carry with them the danger of placing obstacles to social integration instead of enhancing it. Another danger is that groups receiving special support services may get lower priority within mainstream programmes which can also result in greater inequality (Becher and Hussain 2003).

The dilemmas raised by targeting are discussed in the Home-Start report (2005a). Here it is acknowledged that some groups do need special attention because universal policies do not always correspond to their needs. The report suggests asking the people affected about what kind of policies best meet their need and combining 'targeting and universalism' in ways that make more sense and work for the recipients. In order to ensure that diversity does not equal inequality the authors advise that attention be given to what is now called 'institutional racism' in mainstream services, along with greater involvement of local groups and a properly informed and non-judgemental cultural sensitivity. In this respect, cultural awareness involves an understanding not only of the different value systems of different faiths and ethnicities, but how, for individuals, these systems operate not as fixed rules but according to the contexts in which they live.

3.5.2 Evaluation of Programmes
Evaluation is a huge field of research that cannot be covered in a single paragraph. We will limit ourselves here to sharing a number of reflections on some aspects of evaluation that bear particular importance for family support services and programmes.

First, as underlined throughout this chapter, numerous parenting programmes exist and an increasing number of them are being evaluated. However , evaluation remains a minority practice. Ghate and Hazel (2002) speak of 'negative support' and Williams (2004) of the 'wrong' kind of support, indicating that it cannot be taken for granted that programmes aiming to support parents have the intended effect. For vulnerable families negative experiences with services can cause serious harm. There is therefore reason to underline the importance of undertaking evaluation of services and programmes. Asking the participants themselves seem to be an increasingly common approach and can be used in combination with other measures. There is also an increasing attention being paid to evaluating the outcomes that the services have for children, ascertaining the extent to which it has a positive outcome in their daily lives.

Secondly, when choosing how to evaluate programmes, one needs to adopt a critical approach. Barrett (2003) presents results from systematic reviews and meta-analyses of evaluation of parenting interventions as well as other evidence-based surveys and research reviews. She is in favour of scientific rigour and argues that this is the way forward, but also points to some of the difficulties with applying evidence-based and Randomised Control Trials (RCT) approaches. Below we sum up some of the dilemmas

identified by Barrett, those that seem to be important to take into consideration when choosing evaluation design.

The rsearch underlines that parents and children at risk are not a homogeneous group. The social environments in which parenting programmes are run usually bear little resemblance to each other. Programme elements are also often 'mixed and matched', guided by legitimate concerns about the relevance of particular programme elements for particular parents in particular situations. These factors make it difficult to classify the programmes and make them quality for experimental designs (RCT). Most of parenting intervention or evaluation reports of parenting interventions does not meet criteria for inclusion in either systematic reviews or meta-analysis. According to Barret (2003) this gives reason to question if systematic reviews are representative.

The need for information at the dynamic, interactive, process level is not typically the kind of information produced by the typical RCT designs. Rather, RCT designs are premised on the notion that pre-and post-test measures will be comparable and that no extra measures should be needed besides this. Barret (2003) indicates that such programmes try to "tune out" precisely the information that may be of most interest to those working in the field.

More of the evaluation process might be carried out internally, particularly in the early stages of project development, where there should be a heavy emphasis on the assessment of the needs of the parents and their families. Evaluation should try to catch the wealth of qualitative information and learning experiences of workers in either the statutory or voluntary sectors. Accessible forms of record-keeping and information exchange should be developed. Finally, she suggests that there is reason to be critical of the postulate that 'less is more'. Barrett (2003) underlines that an effective approach should pay more, not less, attention to the individual needs of the families.

The following is a summary/overview of provision of support for parenting

Overview of Provision of Support for Parenting

- A variety of programmes and initiatives aiming at supporting parents exist within and across countries. These programes draw from many concepts and theoretical frameworks. Diversity is therefore a watchword.
- Current thinking emphasises protective factors as well as risks. A favoured strategy now in work with families is to seek to reduce the impact of risk factors and increase that of protective factors.
- There seems to be a high level of agreement on the importance of giving parents themselves a say in designing the programmes and the content, to give them a role not only as receivers but as contributors, drawing upon their own experiences of what works. This message corresponds to the increasingly important insight that help-seeking people are not only recipients but are agents in their own lives as well as in welfare policy. The importance of universal and non-stigmatising services is to be underlined.
- Supporting parents implies an action that makes a difference.
- Research suggests that the following principles should inform parenting programmes: nonjudgemental and non-stigmatising attitudes, a bottom-up approach, multi-focused and flexible services, integrated community-based services, inclusivity towards the experience of minority and ethnic groups.
- Programmes aiming at supporting parents must be evaluated and there is also a need to adopt a critical attitude towards what kind of evaluation is appropraite and in particular the need to do justice to different kind of activities. Using a 'one size fits all' approach in designing evaluation there may be a danger of blaming programmes for what are actually short comings in the evaluation designs themselves.

4.

A NON-VIOLENT UPBRINGING FOR CHILDREN
(drafted by Staffan Janson)

4.1 Changing Views of Childhood and the Right to Punish Children

Since the 1990s, it has come to be seen that, while children's immaturity may be a biological phenomenon, the way that society makes this immaturity comprehensible is shaped by culture. This perspective on childhood has paved the way for a new understanding, whereby relations between children and adults are described as a form of interaction, so that children are also seen to influence the life, attitudes and behaviours of adults (Heywood 2005). In other words, children are looked upon as active, creative social agents who produce their own unique children's cultures while simultaneously contributing to adult societies. It should be pointed out, however, that this 'new' view of children and childhood is most prevalent among academics and some practitioners dealing with children. It is certainly not fully accepted by the population at large and the extent to which it has been popularised varies also from country to country. The public tends to hold to the view of childhood as a period when children are prepared for entry into society. Adults most often view children in a forward-looking way, that is, with an eye on what they will become – future adults with a place in the social order and contributions to make to it. This is counter to seeing and appreciating children for what they are – children with ongoing lives, needs and desires. The view of the child as someone whose attitudes and behaviour should be changed and adapted to the views of adult society includes an unspoken right to corrective measures. Unless this is performed in a thoughtful way there is a considerable risk for some sort of victimisation of the child.

Children are at high risk of victimisation for several reasons, including:
- their dependency on adults;
- their relatively small physical stature;
- the legal toleration of victimisation.

Furthermore, given their dependency on adults, children often have little choice regarding whom they associate with and where they live. Such limited options are especially unfortunate for economically disadvantaged children who live in dangerous neighbourhoods, because they increase their vulnerability to both victimisation of an intimate kind and street crime (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1994). The potential of victimisation of young children is highest in the home and in the family. However, as children grow older and spend more time outside the home, they encounter a whole new set of dangers. Loving and responsible parents often find that they have less control over their children's security, while the dangers for children who grow up in unstable and threatening families increase dramatically.

4.2 Corporal Punishment of Children

For long society has relied on parents to convey moral and religious values to the next generation. As long as most people looked upon children as depraved, the only way to foster them was by sticking strictly to a set of moral rules. Quite often this meant hard discipline. Even small children breaking the rules risked being punished. In the 17th century even the future French King Louis XIII was whipped by his nanny when he was only two years old. The philosopher John Locke described a mother who was beating her small daughter eight times before breakfast to override her stubbornness as 'wise and loving'. However the tradition of punishment did not prevail alone. As far back as the 11th century, Anselm of Canterbury questioned the harsh upbringing of boys by the monks and predicted that it would engender hatred and meanness. Protestants in the Netherlands in the 17th century followed an outspoken humanistic tradition, where children were mildly taught how to behave. Female reformers during the 19th century supported mothers to take advantage of their children's attachment instead of punishing them corporally (Heywood 2005). Many more examples could be given, but the underlying point is that corporal punishment has always not been looked upon as an inevitable tool in upbringing of children.

According to dos Santos (2002) there have been three major historical periods of particular relevance concerning the treatment of children as regards punishment. The first is labelled the period of 'parental sovereignty' and includes the period up to the end of the nineteenth century. During this period parents had nearly absolute power over children and the child's own will was disallowed through the use of punishment, often severe physical punishment, meted out by adults with impunity. The second stage has been called the 'child welfare' period, where the state assumed some power over children, including intervening in the domestic arena and acting as the final arbiter of the child's best interests. Parents become more like moral and emotional authorities to their children. The third stage can be called the period of 'children's rights'. It started during the last decades of the twentieth century with the strengthening and expansion of the human rights movement and the establishment of the UNCRC. As previously demonstrated, the Convention has been very influential in viewing children as being both entitled to rights and as needing protection and guidance towards becoming autonomous citizens.

By definition corporal punishment (physical punishment) is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort. Most corporal punishment involves hitting children with the hand or with an implement such as a stick or a belt. It can also involve kicking, shaking or throwing children, pinching, biting, burning, scalding, pulling hair or forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions and with smaller children also forced ingestion. All these acts breach the human rights of the child victim, being an assault on their dignity and physical integrity. Any of these actions would nowadays be criminal assaults in any member state of the Council of Europe if directed at an adult and since 2001 also if directed at a child.

The purpose of parental physical punishment is typically to correct the child's behaviour and deter the child from repeating it. Corporal punishment is commonly understood to be a means of altering a child's behaviour. However it also has psychological elements, quite often aimed at shaming and humiliating the child and sometimes at inducing fear and anxiety. Corporal punishment is mainly used against younger children. It has to be remembered that the adult usually is much larger and stronger than the child and conveys a clear message of power and control. Therefore physical punishment is an act not just of physical aggression but also of psychological aggression.

There is an ongoing controversy in research about whether a distinction can be made between corporal punishment and physical abuse. Some researchers take the position that there are common, normative, everyday types of corporal punishment that are qualitatively different from abusive acts. Others argue that corporal punishment and physical abuse are points on a continuum of violence and that it is impossible to draw a line that distinguishes where punishment ends and abuse begins. While some might consider the presence of physical injury to constitute an objective criterion for defining physical abuse, this criterion is not very useful in practice, for at least two reasons. First, it is impossible to inflict intense physical discomfort on a child without causing injury - even forcing children to stand in contorted positions will soon hurt them. Second, defining abuse as injury ignores the psychological dimension of corporal punishment and the emotional distress and humiliation that it can induce. Moreover, some acts of physical punishment are aimed specifically at inducing fear, disgust or loss of dignity, rather than physical pain. Threats of severe punishment would not be considered abusive under the injury criterion (Durrant 2005).

When researchers have recently tried to find ways to discriminate between corporal punishment and abuse, they tend to end up with the same problem. For example, Gershoff (2002) considers the nature of the act itself. She classifies behaviours that do not risk significant physical injury (spanking, slapping) as corporal punishment and behaviours that risk injury (punching, kicking, burning, etc.) as physical abuse. Straus (1996) on the other hand takes the adult's intent as his departure point. His research defines corporal punishment as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child's behaviour". As will be seen this gives no guidance as to whether there is any qualitative difference between punishment and abuse. It is unlikely that this presumptive distinction can be resolved. This is reason enough not to punish children corporally and as stated by international and European conventions (see below) children are not supposed to be punished corporally.

We wish to point out that corporal punishment is not the only form of child abuse that can have a severe impact on children's health and development. Moreover there are usually no clearcut forms of abuse as neglect, emotional harassment, witness of domestic violence, sexual abuse and corporal punishment quite often go together. Neglect and emotional distress are, however, difficult to define and demarcate and their interactions with other forms of abuse are very complex. Sexual abuse is sometimes combined with corporal punishment or at least with threats of punishment but is usually geared by the

perpetrator's libido in a way that differs qualitatively from physical abuse. The main focus of this chapter however is the dangers of corporal punishment and the possibilities of non violent upbringing. We have therefore decided not to complicate the picture by bringing in other forms of abuse even though we are very much cognisant of both their existence and their importance.

4.2.1 <u>The UNCRC, Council of Europe and Other Important Statements Concerning Punishment and the Rights of the Child</u>

To discipline or punish children through physical harm is a violation of basic human rights. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 states that entitlement to the full respect of physical integrity applies regardless of the circumstances of the person concerned. Since this Declaration was passed, much progress has been achieved regarding the creation of legal constraints and special programmes to stop all forms of physical punishment, at both national and international levels. However, as stated in a recent UNESCO publication, children seldom enjoy the same protection as adults, especially in the case of corporal punishment (Pinheiro 2005). Much violence against children remains invisible and unrecorded. This is both an indication and a result of the low priority accorded to eliminating violence against children.

Corporal punishment of adults is prohibited in well over half of the world's countries, yet only 15 of the 190-plus states have prohibited corporal punishment of children, including in the family. In the remaining 180 states, parents and usually some other caregivers retain 'rights' to hit and humiliate children. Around 50 to 60 states retain corporal punishment of children in their penal system and 60 to 70 allow it in schools and institutions. In many countries, legal defences exist to justify assault on children – the most common being the defence of 'reasonable chastisement' (Newell 2005a). The existence of legal defences for adults who hit children, or the absence of effective protection for children, breaches the equally fundamental right, upheld in Article 7 of the UNCRC and Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (on equal protection).

The UNCRC is the first international human rights instrument expressly addressing prevention of all forms of violence against children. Article 19 requires all states to "take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence" while in the care of parents or other caregivers. In addition, Article 28 requires States to "take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present convention". The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the internationally elected body for the Convention, has consistently stated that legal and social acceptance of corporal punishment of children, whether in their homes or in institutions, is not compatible with the Convention. In 2001 the Committee urged States parties to enact or repeal, as a matter of urgency, their legislation in order to prohibit all forms of violence, however light, within the family and in schools, including as a form of discipline, as required by the provisions of the Convention.

The longest established regional human rights mechanism is the European Court of Human Rights, set up in 1959. The judgments of the Court are binding on member states of the Council of Europe and widely quoted in constitutional and other high-level courts throughout the world. Since the 1970s, the Commission and Court have considered a series of applications alleging that corporal punishment of children breaches the European convention. Sweden has instituted a ban on corporal punishment of children since 1979. In 1982, the European Human Rights Commission rejected an application by a group of Swedish parents who alleged that Sweden's explicit ban on all parental corporal punishment breached their right to respect for family life. The first case of child maltreatment to be considered by the Court was in 1998 concerning an English boy who had been caned by his stepfather. The case had failed in the UK courts on the grounds that the punishment constituted 'reasonable chastisement'. The European Court found unanimously that the punishment violated Article 3 of the European Convention saying that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

Article 17 of the European Social Charter (and revised Social Charter 2001) requires a prohibition in legislation against any form of violence against children, whether at school, in other institutions, in their homes or elsewhere. It furthermore considers that any form of degrading punishment or treatment of children must be prohibited in legislation and be combined with adequate sanctions in penal or civil law. The committee monitoring the Charter has been systematically reviewing the legal status of corporal punishment in member states. Since 2003 the Committee has informed five member states – Poland, France, Slovakia, Romania and Slovenia – that they are not in conformity with Article 17, because all corporal punishment is not effectively prohibited. There is also a procedure allowing for 'collective complaints' to be made against States parties on the grounds that they are not complying with the Social Charters. Thirteen states have so far accepted this procedure. In 2003, collective complaints were registered against five of these countries – Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Portugal – on the grounds that they have not effectively prohibited all corporal punishment and other humiliating treatment of children (Newell 2005a).

Thirteen countries have enacted bans on corporal punishment by parents and all other caregivers: Austria (1989), Bulgaria (2000), Croatia (1999), Cyprus (1994), Denmark (1997), Finland (1983), Germany (2000), Hungary (2004), Iceland (2003), Israel (2000), Latvia (1998), Norway (1987), Romania (2004), Sweden (1979) and Ukraine (2004). In addition Italy's Supreme Court has declared that all corporal punishment, including that in the home, is unlawful, but the decision has not yet been confirmed in legislation.

A national law against violent parental upbringing of children serves at least two good functions. In the first instance, it makes explicit the state's view on child corporal punishment. Among other things, it sends a clear message to people who believe that they can act as if punishment of children is an open case. Secondly, a firm statement provides a platform for all to lean upon. It makes it easier for professionals to stress an anti-violent view, it reassures parents and gives even young children a possibility to assert their rights.

4.3 The Risks of a Violent Upbringing

4.3.1 <u>Biological Consequences of Violence</u>
Glaser (2000) has reviewed the state of knowledge about how child abuse and neglect affects the brain. Her conclusion is that there is considerable evidence for changes in brain function associated with child abuse and neglect. The fact that many of these changes are related to aspects of the stress response is not surprising. The neurobiological findings shed light on the emotional and behavioural difficulties manifested by children who have been abused and neglected.

The volume of the human brain increases more during the first year of life than at any other time. There is a stepwise sequence of neurodevelopment that is genetically predetermined and not alterable by environmental factors. During the first two years of life, there is also a genetically determined overproduction of neurological lines and exchange-points (synapses) in different regions of the brain. This is the important period of plasticity, or potential for change, during which is determined which synaptic connections will persist. This is partly environmentally regulated depending upon which information is received by the brain. There are two important mechanisms involved. One is described as experience-expectant, meaning that it will not happen unless a particular experience occurs during a critical period. The most well known examples are that deaf children do not continue to vocalise in later infancy and that a child with an eye that is deprived of visual input, for example because of a squint, can never see well if this goes beyond 8-10 years of age. The other aspect of brain maturation is termed experience-dependent. This is where environmental inputs actively contribute to brain structure, but unlike the experience-expectant processes the experiences are not predetermined. Young infants have not developed the capacity to regulate their own level of arousal and impulses and are unable to obtain their own gratification and require help in learning to plan their actions. The development of these executive functions requires the maturation of the frontal brain lobes from the end of the first year. Orderly development is dependent on appropriate input and sensitive interaction with the primary caregiver at the sensistive period. One aspect of early child abuse and neglect is the absence of sensitive interaction between parents and the young child. Some depressed mothers are for instance withdrawn or disengaged in their interactions with their child whereas others are insensitive, intrusive and sometimes angry. In the absence of external modulation of affect, the infant brain is unable to learn self-regulation of affect. Such deficit may first become obvious later in life (Cohn and Tronick 1989).

Stress is defined as stimulus or experience that produces a negative emotional reaction or affect, including fear and a sense of loss of control. Potent sources of stress in childhood have now been shown to include severe deprivation and neglect in early life and exposure to violence between parents, as well as more obvious recognised forms of abuse. When children are stressed they react with elevated cortisone levels, which have a potentially damaging effect if it goes on for long (Gunnar 1998). Intrusiveness and insensitive encouragement has been shown to elevate cortisone levels in infants. This has also been shown to happen during a well known psychological test called the Strange Situation

Test. This test is a mild stressor compared to most experiences of child abuse and neglect and reflects the extent of young children's vulnerability to stress.

Broadly one could say that, during early brain development, neglect leads to deprivation of input needed by infants at times of experience-expectant maturation, while abusive experiences affect brain development at experience-dependant stages. Both early neglect and abuse therefore have the potential to affect subsequent brain functioning. Much abuse and neglect, whilst stressful, is not perceived by the child as trauma, if only because of the very predictable and chronic nature of some forms of maltreatment. While Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) is not infrequently found in children who have been maltreated, it is by no means an invariable consequence. Chronic abuse and neglect are likely to have a pervasive effect on a child's psychological and biological regulatory processes rather than to lead to discrete conditioned and emotional responses such as are found in PTSD (van der Kolk 1994).

4.3.2 <u>Psychological and Social Consequences of Violence</u>
According to the meta-analysis carried out by Gershoff (2002), corporal punishment seems to be effective in securing short-term compliance but does not serve to enhance the development of children's internal controls, which are more important to long-term socialisation than immediate compliance. Children's internalisation of morals is thought to be enhanced by parental discipline strategies that use minimal parental power, promote choice and autonomy and provide explanations for desirable behaviours. Attribution theorists emphasise that power-assertive methods such as corporal punishment promote children's external attributions for their behaviour and minimise their attributions to internal motivations. Additionally, corporal punishment may not facilitate moral internalisation because it does not teach children the reasons for behaving correctly, does not involve communication of the effects of children's behaviour on others and may teach children the desirability of not getting caught. The painful nature of corporal punishment can evoke feelings of fear, anxiety and anger in children; if such emotions are generalised to the parent, they can interfere with a positive parent-child relationship.

There are also overwhelming indications that corporal punishment is associated with several undesirable constructs in child behaviour such as aggression, delinquency and antisocial behaviour (McCord 1979). In her longitudinal study of criminality, McCord (1997) reported that corporal punishment by mothers and fathers during childhood predicted whether boys would commit serious crimes 30 years later, regardless of whether the parents had been rated as warm and affectionate with their sons in childhood.

The primary goal for parents when administering corporal punishment is often to stop immediate misbehaving or to stop them from getting injured. Laboratory research on learning has confirmed that corporal punishment is indeed effective in securing short-term compliance, but there is no evidence of long-term effects or possibilities for children to generalise knowledge from this experience (Gershoff 2002).

One of the reasons why there is still some confusion about the outcomes of physical punishment is that it is both impossible and unethical to make randomised controlled

experiments of punishment. It is impossible because most parents would object to punishing their children frequently and unethical to submit children to a model of upbringing that is potentially harmful. When studying corporal punishment in real life situations on the other hand, the results are often confounded with other harmful or abusive parental behaviours.

Although immediate compliance is often a valid short-term goal for parents, their long-term goal is that children should comply in the future and in their absence. Immediate compliance can be imperative when children are in danger, yet successful socialisation requires that children internalise moral norms and social rules. Gershoff (2002) scrutinised hundreds of papers about upbringing from the last sixty years. Her conclusion was that, although corporal punishment is related to immediate compliance, 94% of the outcome represented undesirable behaviours and experiences. Moreover, even when there was short-term compliance, there was a decrease in children's moral internalisations, in their feelings of guilt for their misbehaviour and their tendencies to make reparations upon harming others. Gershoff's work also confirmed a strong association between parental corporal punishment and parental physical abuse of these same children, confirming fears of many researchers that corporal punishment and physical abuse are closely linked.

There are also indications that pain and anger can motivate children toward escape or resistance and retaliations. Escaping pain may result in trying to withdraw from or avoid the parents. This response may be especially likely when the child realises that the parent intended for the child to feel pain. If pain causes children to flee from their parents after corporal punishment, it can have the unintended effect of undermining the parent's attempts to socialize children after spanking (Parke 1977; Lazarus 1991).

Corporal punishment may also elicit anger from children either because their goals have been frustrated or because they feel they were punished unfairly or inappropriately. Children's anger at being spanked may cause them to lash back at their parents either as a reflex or to try to stop the spanking. Sequential analyses have also confirmed that when mothers use hitting to punish their children, children tend to respond with aggression themselves (Snyder and Patterson 1986). When parents use a physical means of controlling and punishing their children, they communicate to their children that aggression is normal, acceptable and effective – beliefs that promote social learning of aggression. Corporal punishment is a prime candidate for imitation because children are disposed to imitate aggressive models and because children want to imitate and please parents whom they care about. The argument that children imitate corporal punishment is particularly poignant when children are punished for aggression, because corporal punishment models the very behaviour that parents are trying to discourage in their children (Bandura 1977). Although parents want to teach their children not to hit others, the unintended message of their use of corporal punishment is that it is acceptable to hit others when they behave in ways that one does not like. Despite this risk of imitation, parents use corporal punishment more in response to children's aggression than to any other misbehaviour (Gershoff 2002).

Children who understand and accept parents' disciplinary requests will be more likely to comply with them and, as a result, to behave in socially appropriate ways. But if parents do not clearly verbalise their message, children may misperceive it. For example, a parent who spanks a child for running into the street intends for the child to learn that such behaviour is dangerous, yet the child may interpret the parent's response to mean that he or she should not run into the street when the parent is around. The emotional arousal due to the spanking may also prevent the child from attending to or understanding the parent's message (Hoffman 1983).

4.4 Alternatives to a Violent Upbringing

In this section we call upon the last 40 years of experience in Sweden to elucidate national experience of policy outlawing violence against children. After the institution of the ban against corporal punishment of children in Sweden in 1979, police reports on child abuse increased steadily. This became a concern, especially as the figures increased even further during the economic recession of the mid-1990s. In 1998 the Swedish Committee on Child Abuse and Related Issues was established. Its first investigation was to scrutinise all medical journals concerning abuse of children. These showed that there had been no increase in either severe or moderately severe child abuse during the period 1980 to 2000. The change was in fact due to a greater tendency to report suspected abuse and neglect, which was actually in line with the intentions of the law.

The Committee also carried out three national representative studies on child maltreatment in spring 2000. The results of these three investigations have been published in a Swedish report (Janson 2001a) and a separate English summary (Janson 2001b). The first study – of parents found that a big decrease in corporal punishment of pre-school children between 1980 and 2000 - from 51% to 8%. Among the group of parents who used corporal punishment as a strategy in their children's upbringing, frequent corporal punishment had reduced by one-third over the same period. Severe and repeated child maltreatment was estimated in 2000 to occur in less than 0.5% of all Swedish children. Consequently, not only were many fewer children being punished, but those who were punished were exposed to a much lesser degree. There are reasons to believe that the decline of repeated and severe punishment also decreases the risk of severe intentional injuries and some deaths. The results of the parental studies were confirmed by complementary investigations and local studies performed by other researchers in Sweden. In addition, there have been national surveys on attitudes to corporal punishment of children in Sweden since the 1960s which show the following pattern over the last 40 years.

Table 4.1 The Development of Corporal Punishment of Children in Swedish Families and Adults' Attitudes to Spanking 1960 - 2000
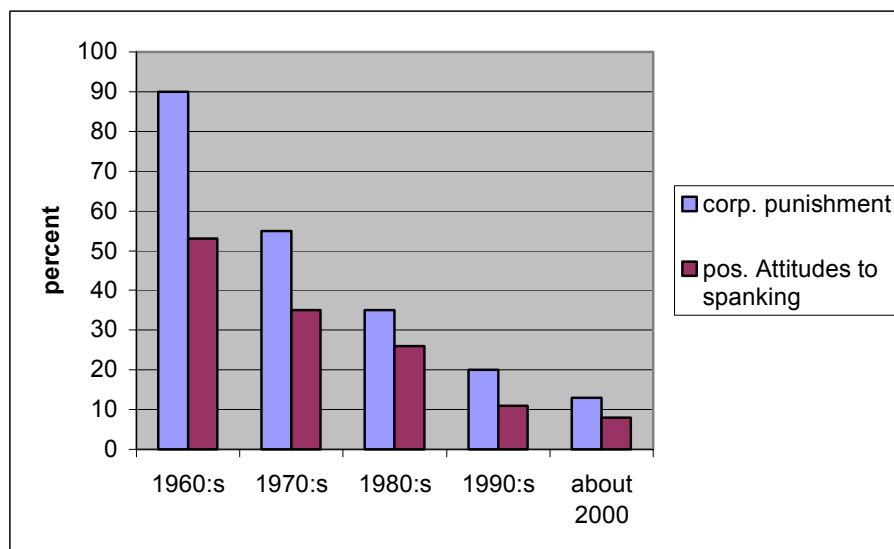
Source: Janson (2005).

It can be seen that there is a steady and parallel decline both in positive attitudes to corporal punishment and reports of corporal punishment. The decline is so steep that it is probably one of the greatest changes in attitudes and behaviour ever seen in adult Swedes. It should however be noted that these changes had started well before the institution of the corporal punishment ban. Some decduce from this that the law in itself had no effect on parental attitudes or behaviour. However it is important to understand that the intention of the Swedish government was to support an ongoing process and to confirm that the Swedish state takes a negative view of the corporal punishment of children. The reasons underlying the successive changes in behaviour and attitudes are complex, of which the law is just a single factor. Other important factors are probably the development of the welfare state, higher levels of parental education and a well-functioning maternal and child health care system with almost 100% coverage. The fact that most Swedish pre-school children spend their daytime in well-functioning pre-schools is also important as it means that pre-school children are regularly observed by people outside the family which makes corporal punishment more difficult to hide.

A possible objection to a ban seems to be that a law could be looked upon as an unrealistic 'quick fix' and could tie down already overstretched child-protection professionals in enforcing the ban. Neither of these has proved valid for Sweden. First, the Swedish corporal punishment ban was one of a series of protective laws that started in 1928 when teachers were prohibited from physically punishing boys in secondary schools. It was followed by the prohibition of all corporal punishment in Swedish schools in 1958 and successive changes in parents' rights to punish their children, where the 'reasonable chastisement' defence was repealed in 1957 and corporal punishment was

explicitly abolished in 1979. Second, this law is a firm recommendation by the state not to punish children while the punishment itself is regulated by the maltreatment paragraphs in the criminal code. The main idea behind the law is not to find criminals but to protect children against maltreatment. When professionals in health care and social work understood this basic idea, they felt that the law provided a good platform when discussing with parents different ways of bringing up children. In later years this has been particularly important in encounters with immigrant families from cultures where corporal punishment of children is considered a more normal behaviour. The common experience in Sweden is that professionals, whether in health care, social services, the police forces or at school, do not feel overstretched because of enforcing the ban. The experience is rather the opposite: that most professionals feel it as a strength to have the law to lean on.

The concern has been expressed that parents, who by law are restrained from using corporal punishment, may adopt a permissive parenting style and consequently fail to confront their children firmly enough to induce compliance (Baumrind 1996; Larzelere and Johnsson 1999). Recent research from Sweden indicates that parents have become more skilled at obtaining consent in parent-child conflicts (Palmerus and Jutengren 2000). In this study different forms of verbal control towards pre-school children were by far the most common and indeed alike between mothers and fathers. Moreover almost 90% of all verbal controls were firm commands, with expressions of disappointment and angry interrogations making up the rest. Intervention by behaviour modification was much less common and when it occurred itcomprised in 60% of cases a withdrawal of privileges. Pressuring the child to accept the consequences or apologise for misbehaviour made up 23% within this group and isolating him or her (in the form of withdrawing the child from the presence of other people for some period of time) accounted for 16%. Coercive behaviour on the part of the parents was by far the most uncommon and mainly a question of physical restraint or sometimes threats. Deliberate physical punishment was very rare. The authors of this study conclude that Swedish parents employ a rather stable use of assertive discipline across both initial and repeated episodes of both mild and serious child transgressions. There is consequently no support for the hypothesis that Swedish parents give up on their demands for compliance even though they mainly apply a 'soft' parenting style. In the Scandinavian countries this is mainly looked upon as a child-rearing policy emphasising mutual respect between parents and children. A parent who is faced with a child who refuses to go to bed and chooses to comfort the child and reassure it will be described as emphatic. In other cultures, however, this might be looked upon as permissive parenting. It is also of paramount importance to understand the difference between straightforward obedience on one hand and the internalisation of values on the other (Grusec and Kuczynski 1997).

In 2000, the German government passed a law prohibiting physical punishment in the family. Nationwide representative surveys were carried out, both ahead of and after the institution of the law, and preliminary results concerning the outcome have recently been published (Bussman 2004). The surveys reveal a significant decrease in corporal punishment between 1996 and 2001, but this change is naturally difficult to connect to the new law as this was instituted just one year ahead of the last survey. The result is

probably rather an effect of an ongoing change of behaviour, that seems to go parallel with attitude changes in the developed welfare states in Europe. In Germany there is however a high acceptance of the legal prohibition. In particular, awareness of the legal limits of parental physical sanctions has increased significantly. The situation in Germany in 2001 is similar to the situation in Sweden twenty years earlier, as two-thirds of the German parents still slap their children and one third-reports spanking them. Given that changed attitudes usually preceed behaviour change, follow up of the German experiences will be very interesting.

4.5 Why a Non-violent Upbringing Should be Applied

By way of summary, let us take an overview of the many convincing reasons why a non-violent upbringing of children should be sought.

Reasons for a Non-Violent Upbringing of Children

- Corporal punishment of children should be looked upon as a part of our common history where poverty and ignorance guided adult behaviour;
- To punish corporally is to give a negative role model for the future and a negative connotation as to how society works;
- In modern welfare societies like those of Europe there are great possibilities to bring up children using positive means and in cases where parents experience difficulties society should be able to help with professional guidance;
- Experience tells us that it is difficult if not impossible to maintain a clear boundary between decent corporal rebuke and abuse. Instead, the risk of corporal punishment escalating into dangerous behaviour is very great;
- All the evidence suggests that a non-violent upbringing has a high chance of a good outcome. Non-violent upbringing is not synonymous with a laissez-faire approach;
- Corporal punishment of children is outlawed in Europe according to the revised European Social Charter of 2001. Since 1989 and the UNCRC children of the world have got the same rights as adults to a non violent life space.

Given that there are so convincing reasons why upbringing of children should be managed by non violent methods, how come so many parents still use corporal punishment? The most common reason is probably that parents still believe that corporal punishment is an effective way of changing behaviour. They have often noticed that children stop their disfavoured activities when spanked. What parents do not realise is that this outcome is short-term only and not internalised in the child's moral values. The great risk here is that such parents, even though they think that they have good intentions, may end up damaging their children severely. Another group of parents do not want to spank their children but resort to violent manners when severely stressed. Those parents are usually very regretful afterwards. The third group consists of parents who have certain psychiatric illnesses, parents of disturbed character and parents with Post

Traumatic Stress Disorders i.e. after war and refugee experiences. Most of these parents do not abuse their children when they are recovered from their illnesses.

4. 6 Principles for Constructive Child Discipline

The American Academy of Paediatrics has a special Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. In 1998 they launched guidelines for effective discipline of children, mainly aimed at paediatricians, but also very much adapted for parents (A.A.P. 1998). The guidelines are also close to the work issued by the Swedish Committee on Child Abuse and Related Issues (Janson 2001a) and the framework of guiding principles created by UNICEF (Power and Hart 2005). The following text is mainly a compilation and adaptation of these three guidelines.

Power and Hart (2005) delineate seven guiding principles for constructive child discipline which appear to have universal relevance, at both an individual and collective level. The principles are designed to promote pro-social skills and child development committed to and expressing justice, fairness, compassion and integrity. Most importantly, they are principles for discipline that respect the child's dignity. The seven principles are:

Seven Practices of Discipline that Promote the Child's Dignity

- Respect of the child's dignity;
- Develop pro-social behaviour, self discipline and character;
- Maximise the child's active participation;
- Respect the child's developmental needs and quality of life;
- Respect the child's motivation and life views;
- Assure fairness and transformative justice;
- Promote solidarity.

'Dignity' refers to the state of being worthy, honoured or esteemed. Respect for the child's dignity is supported by both the UNCRC (Articles 28, 23 and 37) and the revised European Social Charter. The basic idea is that children should be protected and respected. Adults should be the stewards rather than the owners of the child. Efforts to correct erroneous, antisocial, hurtful and dangerous behaviour on the part of the child should be educative in nature and validate the child as a valued and accepted person.

Human beings have a great potential for pro-social behaviour and self-discipline and this is best fostered through education that leads to personal integrity. This principle is supported by UNCRC Article 29.1, which states that "education of the child should be directed towards the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins".

Participation and involvement on the part of the child are necessary to achieve investment in shared pro-social values and to promote self-efficacy and respect for the child's dignity. Having one's views considered and being given the opportunity to influence conditions affecting oneself and the persons and things one values is essential to human dignity and democratic citizenship. The moral reasoning and ethical behaviour of children have been found to advance in homes and schools by involving the children in discussions of real-life dilemmas, standard construction and problem-solving (Berkowitz 2002). Article 112 of the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Children's act) states that children's participation in the construction of the ground rules in which consequences are clearly set can prevent children from breaking them. This act also contains four constructive alternatives suited for school-age children (Power and Hart 2005):

- The admonitory dialogue: A calm and firm dialogue with children and teenagers to elaborate on their undesired action, practice and behaviour;
- The reparation of damages and rectification of wrongs: Having children repair any damages they have caused and make amends for wrongdoing seems to be one of the most efficient non-violent methods for the preventive discipline of children;
- The restriction of privileges: This measure can teach children to weigh the pros and cons of following or breaking agreements. Such restrictions should however under no circumstances affect children's fundamental rights, such as to eat and not be submitted to forced labour. 'Privileges' here concern not watching a favourite TV programme or not meeting friends;
- The rendering of services to the community: This consists of doing voluntary work for short periods of time at public-assistance institutions such as hospitals and schools.

The most important factor in dealing with discipline problems is prevention. Most discipline problems arise from breaking of rules that are made within the school or family setting or are universal moral norms, such as not stealing from others. As many rules are similar between the home and the school, a positive co-operation can usually be of good support. Many adults in the family, within schools and associations can and will inevitably be role models. Modelling of good and non-violent behaviour is best done by adults who are respected by the children. This requires that adults behave honestly as imperfect humans who exhibit humane behaviour.

4.7 Practical Guidelines for a Non-violent Upbringing

For discipline techniques to be most effective, they must occur in the context of a relationship where children feel loved and secured. In such a context, parents' responses to children's behaviour, whether approving or disapproving, are likely to have the greatest effect because the parents' approval is important to children. Parental responses within the context of loving and secure relationships also provide children with a sense that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them, which leads to the development of a sense of personal worth. As children respond to the positive nature of the relationship and consistent discipline, the need for frequent negative

interaction decreases, and the quality of the relationship improves further for both parents and children. To this end the best educators of children are people who are good role models and about whom children care enough to want to imitate and please. Certain conditions in the parent-child relationship have been found to be especially important in promoting positive child behaviour, including:

Conditions that Promote Positive Child Behaviour

- Maintaining a positive emotional tone in the home through play and parental warmth and affection for the child;
- Providing attention to the child to increase positive behaviour. For older children, attention includes being aware of and interested in the school performance, other behaviour and peer contacts outside the home;
- Providing consistency in the form of regular times and patterns in daily activities and interactions to reduce resistance, convey respect for the child and make negative experiences less stressful;
- Responding consistently to similar behaviour situations to promote more harmonious parent-child relationships;
- Being flexible, particularly with older children and adolescents, through listening and negotiation to reduce fewer episodes of child non-compliance with parental expectations. Involving the child in decision making has been associated with long-term enhancement in moral judgment.

The word 'discipline' usually connotes strategies to reduce undesirable behaviours. As we have learned throughout this chapter, eliminating undesirable behaviour without having a strategy to stimulate more desirable behaviour generally is not effective. Much desirable behaviour emerges as part of the child's normal development, and the role of adults is to notice these behaviours and provide positive attention to strengthen them. Other desirable behaviours are not a part of the child's natural repertoire and so need to be taught. This could include what is looked upon as good manners and behaving according to accepted principles despite the fact that immediate and easy to obtain rewards for other behaviour may be present. Strategies on the part of parents and other caregivers that help children learn positive behaviour include:

> **Strategies to Help Children learn Positive Behaviours**
>
> - Providing regular positive attention and communicate this to children of all ages;
> - Listening carefully to children and helping them to express their feelings.
> - Helping children to learn how to evaluate the potential consequences of their choices;
> - Reinforcing emerging desirable behaviours with frequent praise and ignoring trivial misdeeds;
> - Modelling orderly, predictable behaviour, respectful communication, and collaborative conflict resolution strategies.

Such strategies have several potential benefits, where the desired behaviour is more likely to be internalised and be a foundation for other desirable behaviours. When Swedish parents were asked how they were able to bring up their children without corporal punishment (Janson 2001a), the vast majority stated that they performed any or all of the following strategies for young er children:

- Distraction;
- Making jokes;
- Calming down the child by finding alternative ways of doing something together;
- Hugging the child and getting s/he to listen and point out what is wrong.

For older children they also specifically mentioned support of good behaviour and the avoidance of conscious insults. What the research shows is that parents find other ways to solve conflicts when they are convinced that corporal punishment of children is both ineffective and a way of humiliating the child.

Some undesirable behaviours require, however, an immediate response because of danger or risk to the child. Other undesirable behaviours require a consistent consequence to prevent generalisation of the behaviour to other situations. Some problems, particularly those that involve intense emotional exchanges, may be handled best by taking a break from the situation and discussing it later when emotions have subsided, developing alternative ways to handle the situation (removing attention) or sometimes avoiding the situation altogether in cases where that is possible and desirable.

Factors that May Increase the Effectiveness of Time out and Removal of Privileges

- Clarity from the parent what the problem behaviour is and what consequences the child can expect when this behaviour occurs;
- A distinct and immediate initial consequence when the targeted behaviour first occurs and a following consistence in consequences;
- Delivering instructions and corrections as calmly as possible and with empathy;
- Providing a reason for a consequence of a specific behaviour.

In pre-school children time-out (which usually involves the removal of positive parental attention) has been shown to increase compliance from about 25% to 80%, and similar effectiveness is seen when used appropriately with older children (often a question of denying participation in desired activities). Time-out must, however, be employed in a consistent manner, for an appropriate duration, not excessively and with strategies to manage escape behaviour of the child. When time-out is first implemented, it usually will result in increased negative behaviour by the child, who will test the new limit with a display of emotional behaviour. The parent who accepts this normal reaction and does not respond to the child's behaviour will find that outbursts become less frequent and the undesirable behaviour diminishes or disappears. Applied in this way the child's feelings are not damaging to her self-esteem, despite the sometimes intense reactions. The parent has to understand, that time-out is not effective immediately, but normally highly effective in the long run. The inability of parents to deal with their own distress during time- out is one of the most common reasons for its failure (AAP 1998).

Many parents use disapproving verbal statements as a form of punishment to alter undesired behaviour. When used infrequently and targeted toward specific behaviours, such reprimands may be transiently effective in immediately halting or reducing undesirable behaviour. However, if used frequently and indiscriminately verbal reprimands lose their effectiveness and reinforce undesired behaviour because they provide attention to the child. Verbal reprimands should refer to the undesirable behaviour and not slander the child's character.

Although significant concerns have been raised about the negative effects of physical punishment and its potential escalation into child abuse, spanking as a mean of discipline remains a quite common strategy in upbringing of children around the world, also in Europe. Despite its common acceptance among adults, and even advocacy for its use (Larzelere 1996), spanking has been shown to be a less effective strategy than time-out and removal of privileges for reducing undesired behaviour in children. As discussed earlier spanking may immediately reduce or stop undesired behaviour, but its

effectiveness decreases with subsequent use. The only way to maintain the initial effect of spanking is to systematically increase the intensity with which it is delivered, which can quickly escalate into abuse.

Summary of Negative Consequences of Spanking

- Spanking of children under two years of age increases the risk of severe physical injury and the child is unlikely to understand the connection between behaviour and punishment. Children also come to accept spanking as a parent's right at an early age, making changes in adult acceptance of spanking more difficult.
- Because spanking may provide the parent some relief from anger, the likelihood that the parent will spank the child in the future increases. Spanking of young children is also highly correlated to spanking of older children. Parents who have relied on spanking does not seem to shift strategies even when they understand that the detrimental effects increase (Straus 1996);
- Repeated spanking may cause agitated ,aggressive behaviour in the child;
- Spanking and threats of spanking leads to altered parent-child relationships, making discipline substantially more difficult, when physical punishment is no longer an option, as with adolescents.
- Spanking is less effective as a long-term strategy than most other options.

A problem is that many adults, professionals such as paediatricians and psychologists included, have learned much of their parenting skills from their own parents, who probably used spanking. They find their parents' practices more acceptable than other methods. It is possibly also that a majority of adults, who were spanked as children, do not think this hurt them severely in the long run. For the same traditional reasons, some religious groups take a strong position in favour of corporal punishment. Given all the negative consequences that we now are aware of with corporal punishment, these traditions have to be overcome. The Scandinavian experience described earlier underlines that the attitudes and behaviour of adults can be changed in a fairly short time and that upbringing without spanking has up to now shown no negative side effects.

5.

PARENTING – AN ELEMENT IN DRUG PREVENTION
(drafted by Maj Berger Sæther)

Society today is often depicted as a risk society (Beck 1992). Everyone is vulnerable to a certain extent and no one can avoid being exposed to risk. This applies in particular to children and young people. One of the most feared risks is drugs (drug addiction). This is, however, a risk factor that we can limit, and in this parents and parenting play an important role. However it is important to point out that the family is just one of a number of influences and that, for the purposes of understanding drug-related behaviour among young people, the family has to be placed in a wider context. Hence, explanations for increasing drug use among young people are often sought in changes in society and family life, disintegrating local environments, disruption of norms and weakened informal social control.

This chapter sets out key aspects of the relationship between drug-taking and the behaviour of parents. It first outlines some of the key findings on the prevalence and pattern of drug use by young people in Europe and the policy priorities. It then elaborates the general role and competence of parents as 'drug educators' and 'primary preventors'.

5.1 Understanding the Use of Drugs by Young People

In terms of prevalence of drug-taking by young people in Europe, substance use appears to be a part of contemporary youth culture. The ESPAD Report (Hibell et al 2004) describes the situation regarding alcohol, illicit drugs and tobacco use among 15 – 16 year old students in European countries. The three data collections in 1995, 1999 and 2003 also provide a reliable overview of trends in licit and illicit drug use among European adolescents for the period between 1995 and 2003.

In a majority of the participating countries about half or more of the students had consumed at least one glass of beer or wine by the age of 13 years or younger. It is less common, however, to have tasted spirits (at least one glass) at this age. In about half of the countries this is a reported experience by about one third of young people.

The following are the main conclusions of the report:

> ### Main Patterns of Alcohol and Drug Consumption by Young People in Europe
>
> - The pattern of alcohol consumption is such that frequent drinking is most prevalent among students in the western part of Europe, such as the British Isles, the Netherlands and Belgium, but also in Austria, the Czech Republic and Malta. Very few students in the northern parts of Europe drink that frequently.
> - Beer consumption is most prevalent in Bulgaria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Poland, while wine consumption is the alcoholic drink of choice in typical wine producing countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Malta and Slovenia. The consumption of spirits is less uniform, with high prevalence rates in such disparate countries as the Faroe Islands, Greece, Ireland, Isle of Man, Malta and the United Kingdom.
> - The prevalenve of drunkenness seems to be most concentrated in countries in the western parts of Europe, with Denmark, Ireland, Isle of Man and the United Kingdom specifically identified in this respect. Very few students report frequent drunkenness in Mediterranian countries such as Cyprus, France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Turkey.
> - Illicit drug use is dominated by use of marijuana or hashish. Frequent use is mainly reported from countries in the central and western parts of Europe, where more than one third of the students have used it. The high prevalence countries include the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Isle of Man, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The low prevalence countries are found in the north as well as the south of Europe.

The trend over the 8 years of the ESPAD history is for an unchanged or somewhat decreasing consumption of alcohol among young people in the western parts of Europe. Increases were mainly found in the eastern parts. The use of illicit drugs is still dominated by cannabis. The high prevalence countries in 2003 were the same as those in 1999, but an increasing trend was observed in the eastern parts of Europe. The research also made clear that an increasing number of students in many European countries find cannabis easily available (ibid, 128).

There is extensive research on the reasons for the use of drugs by young people. The consensus of opinion is that such reasons are complex and highly culture-specific. Drug use by young people is now considered to be a result of the interaction of various factors relating to the different levels of individual, group and society. It is known to be linked to a complex mixture of cognitive, behavioural, social, personality-related and developmental factors. Various studies show that consumption can and does vary accordng to social background characteristics, including gender, age, place of residence, family structure and social control (intervention), social class and cultural capital (Pedersen 1998; Hibell et al. 2004). The media is also a very important factor influencing drug use. Drugs are often portrayed by the media as an integral part of being popular, being successful, having sex appeal, being sophisticated and feeling good. This portrayal

can be assumed to have a big influence on drug use by young people (Natvig 1999). Some countervailing force to make it easier for young people to resist the pressure or the influence of friends will, therefore, be important. Such a counterbalance is something than can be provided by parents during childhood and adolescence.

There is much research also that shows a clear link between an early alcohol debut (the age at which a person first drinks alcohol) and subsequent development of high alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems such as violence, brawling, mental problems, truancy and loss of control (Forney et al. 1988; Chou and Pickering, 1992; Pedersen and Skrondal 1998). Several studies also indicate that tobacco and alcohol can be regarded as gateway drugs to the use of illegal drugs (Kandel et al. 1992; Pedersen and Skrondal 1999).

5.2 The Role of Parents

Among the explanatory factors particular attention needs to be placed on close social networks. The expression 'informal social control' refers to the regulation of an individual's behaviour and norms or value system by means of normal social interaction with other people in primary groups and in contact with network members. Informal social control is exercised mainly by the primary socialisation agents, i.e. parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbours, teachers, youth leaders, and so on. For most children and young people, family and friends make up their closest social network. If the close social network fails, one can imagine that other socialisation agents will have a stronger influence. We know that children and young people spend a lot of time watching television and videos. Various forms of information and communication technology are becoming an increasingly large part of their everyday lives. As mentioned, the media often portray alcohol use as a natural part of life. On the other hand, the use of and problems associated with illegal drugs are often the subject of a unilaterally negative and fearful focus. The media portrayal of drugs and associated problems can contribute to creating a feeling of powerlessness in parents, among other effects, a form of reduced freedom of action or a reduced feeling of scope for action. It is also possible that such feelings are fostered by the perception that it is the responsibility of the state and the public authorities to solve all the problems.

In societies undergoing a lot of change, like those in contemporary Europe, in which young people are searching hard for identity, belonging, meaning and a lifestyle, it seems important and necessary to develop their inherent worth, self-respect and skills, and to transfer norms and values. This can serve to challenge drug use becoming the marker of lifestyle and identity. Via the socialisation process and upbringing, parents can contribute greatly to reinforcing these central aspects of the development of an individual by actively communicating norms and values by means of good interaction.

John Bowlby (1984) emphasises the importance of parents providing a safe base from which the child/young person can go out into the world and to which he or she can return in the certainty that he or she is welcome and will receive psychological and emotional support, comfort and protection. He suggested that parents must be available and ready to

answer questions, encourage their children and help them. He states that study after study has established that healthy, happy, independent adolescents and young adults are the products of stable homes in which both parents devote a lot of time and attention to the child.

The role of parents in drug prevention work, then, is not a question of 'if' but 'how'. A range of aspects of parent-child relations and how they affect young people's inclination to use drugs are important. Parents' own relationship with alcohol and other drugs is also important. Moreover, the degree to which parents are the supply source for young people's drug consumption is important.

Research identifies home and family to be a crucial location affecting young people's behaviour as regards drug use. Among other factors, the influence of home and parents is known to be crucial (Marklund 1983; Barnes and Farell 1992; Peterson et al., 1994; Reifman et al., 1998; Pedersen 1998; Henriksen 2000; Bu 2002). Several Nordic studies show, among other things, that the drug-related attitudes of young people whose parents are liberal towards their drug use differ to those of young people with more restrictive parents. Adolescents who are given alcohol by their parents are known to start earlier and drink more than those who are not provided with alcohol at home (Pedersen 1990; Jackson et al. 1999; Marklund 1997; Ferrer-Wreder et al. 2002, Krange and Storvoll, 2003). However, this is culturally dependent and so must be recognised as varying among European countries. Furthermore, different studies have shown a strong association between parental control and all types of substance use among young people. For instance there is a strong indication that parental control combined with support and warmth reduces adolescent substance use (Bakken 1998; Clausen 1999; Sæther 2002; Hibell et al., 2004).

Research by Eickhoff and Zinnecker (2000) has identified examples of home conditions that make children less vulnerable in relation to all types of drug (tobacco, alcohol, light and heavy narcotics). Such conditions occur when:

Home Conditions that ReduceVulnerability to Drugs

- Young people feel understood by their parents;
- Young people consider their parents to be competent life advisers;
- Young people notice that their parents follow their school work with interest;
- Young people participate in joint leisure activities with their parents;
- Young people perceive the family climate to be cooperative and harmonious;
- Young people feel respected as persons by both their parents.

5.3 Policy Priorities at International Level

As is widely known, alcohol and drug consumption have wide-ranging effects on the health of the individual as well as the well-being of society. The negative aspects have

caused great concern in the international community, at national level and in local communities. At a European level the EU has developed action plans with specific targets. These targets are wide-ranging, covering the use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs from the perspective of young people's wellbeing (Hibell et al. 2004). The six targets are as follows:

- To reduce significantly over five years the prevalence of illicit drug use, as well as new recruitment to it, particulary among young people under 18 years of age;
- To reduce substantially over five years the incidence of drug related helth damage (HIV, hepatitis B and C, TBC., etc.) and the number of drug-related deaths;
- To increase substantially the number of successfully treated addicts;
- To reducs substantially over five years the availability of illicit drugs;
- To reduce substantially over five years the number of drug related crimes;
- To reduce substantially over five years moneylaundring and illicit trafficking of precursors.

There also exists a European Alcohol action plan, including a declaration on young people and alcohol, formulated by the WHO. This aims to substantially reduce the number of young people who start consuming alcohol, to delay the onset of drinking by young people, to reduce the occurrence and frequency of high-risk drinking among young people, especially adolecents and young adults, to increase education for young people on alcohol and to substantially reduce alcohol-related harm, especially accidents, assaults and violence among young people.

5.4 Drug Prevention

The concept of prevention was originally used in the health care sector in connection with hygiene work and limiting sources of infection and disease, and in the field of public health work. The concept can be considered relatively imprecise and ambiguous. An extended concept of prevention in relation to what was common in the field of public health work was introduced by Caplan (1964). He divided preventive work into three concepts, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention[13], depending on the phase in a problem development process in which action is taken and the degree to which it is possible to identify the target group and problem. The intention of primary prevention is to prevent injury or disease from occurring. This is what usually lies behind the use of the term 'prevention'.

Measures implemented by the public authorities are clear examples of the widespread perception that it is the task of the welfare state to carry out prevention. Over the years, the home and the family have received relatively little attention as a prevention arena, and little has been done to guide and reinforce this arena towards primary prevention. However, increased knowledge of parents' roles, parent-child relations and parents' attitudes, when seen in relation to young people's drug use, points to the importance of a

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[13] Secondary prevention is used to refer to action intended to prevent problems from continuing or worsening and is usually directed at risk groups. Tertiary preventive action is directed at seriously affected target groups, among other things to reduce the negative consequences of, for example, heavy drug abuse.

greater degree of parental participation in drug prevention work for children and young people.

There is much evidence to suggest that parents are the most important preventors of drug-related behaviour. In this context it is helpful to think of the role that home and parents can play in creating the circumstances under which young people may refuse to try drugs.[14] These include the following:

Circumstances which Help Young People to Refuse Drugs

- Their parents have taught them the importance of making their own choices and seeing the consequences of the choices that they make;
- They have talked to their parents about why people use drugs, why it is difficult to stop, the fact that drugs can be very dangerous, the legal and other rules that apply and the fact that using drugs can have serious consequences for one's life;
- They have been given clear rules from home, for example on the time that they are expected home or the time that they will be collected when they are out with friends. These serve to shield young people from difficult situations and give them 'excuses' for saying no;
- They have learned arguments for saying no, for example: "Not sure I can cope with this - you never know how you will react ..." or "I stand by my friends. It is not certain that my friends can cope with this, even if I can …";
- They know someone who has had serious mental problems after using drugs.

There is much that parents themselves can do to contribute to increasing the probability that children do not develop drug problems. Parents usually know their children better than anyone else. Hence they can provide the best basis for the choices that the child makes later during adolescence.

There is wide agreement among experts that poor contact between children and parents is one important reason for abnormal development in young people (Eickoff and Zinnecker 2000). This means that the best investment the parents can make is to spend a lot of time in close contact with their children in an open atmosphere discussing important business and subjects. Eickoff and Zinnecker (2000) discuss among other topics the conditions for communication within the family and between generations. They recommend programs which aim at giving parents competence to handle the drug topic in communication with their children. This idea is supported by Henriksen (2000). However this is not only the parents' responsibility. Children should also be trained in communication about drugs.

Parents' style of upbringing, linked to their ability and willingness to discuss delicate subjects, not least the adults' own habits, seems to be very important for how young

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[14] The following is largely taken directly from the following three Norwegian and Swedish publications: Klyve (2004), Oslo Commune (2002), Stockholms stads socialtjänsteförvaltning (2005).

people gradually organise their own social lives. One such delicate subject is the use or abuse of drugs. Children and young people are invaded by the influence of drugs long before they themselves first try drugs. They see other young people and adults drinking alcohol in various situations and they hear and read stories about the behaviour of drug addicts. Many children and young people are confused because they themselves have observed changes taking place when adults use drugs. They sense moods, but few adults talk about what is happening. One very positive thing that adults can do is to contribute to a reduction in children's confusion.

Discussions of issues relating to drugs can start early. This is indeed desirable. The best way for adults to contribute to dispelling confusion among children is for them to be clear about their own limits for using drugs by throwing out some clear 'marker buoys'. It is necessary to seize golden opportunities, for example when a child says something about drugs himself or herself. In such discussions, a tactful adult will also be able to communicate care for those struggling with harmful drug use. An understanding, loving adult, who also makes clear his or her own stand, will always be attractive as a discussion partner. At the same time, it will be natural and acceptable for the child to come back with important new subjects. Experts therefore urge adults to prepare for drug use to be a subject at home. Essential for this purpose is the creation of a good discussion climate early on, so that it is natural for children and young people to go to adults with both trivial and significant subjects for discussion. The benefit from the time, clarity and availability invested is that children and young people will have a lower risk of developing their own drug problems.

Teenagers as they grow older usually feel that being with the family is less important. Friends become more important. This is a natural part of development, but it should not be forgotten that they still need adults and parents in particular. They just need them in a different way to before. In several surveys, young people actually say that they want more time with their parents and other adults. Research shows that the more time a child spends with his or her family, the less chance he or she has of having problems with various drugs.

According to Ferrer-Wreder et al (2005) there are several promising programs for drug preventive parenting. They often include general family interventions as well as a specific drugs focus in which the following is regarded as very important:

Priorities for Parental Provision
- Giving parents correct information about drugs, both legal and illegal;
- Encouraging and enabling parents to clarify their own attitudes to adolecents' use of alcohol and other drugs;
- Helping parents to define and keep up a family policy on adolescents' use of drugs;
- Training programs for parents and adolescents to deal with peer/social pressure.

Overall, the main message is that parenting plays a crucial role in regard to drug-related behaviour.

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