



Ministry of Social Policy and Youth

Leaving No One Behind

Children in Alternative Care in the Republic of Croatia

TransMonEE Network Meeting

Geneva, 6-7 October 2016



A child – a person below the age of 18

Legal framework governing types of placement:

- Social Welfare Act
- Family Act
- Foster Care Act

Bodies mandated with decision making on placement of children outside of their families

- Social Welfare Centers
- Courts



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN 2014-2020

The Strategy Goals for children in alternative care:

- to ensure consistent protection of rights of children in alternative care (standards of social services and individualized approach);
- to ensure preservation of child's sense of identity (maintain contacts with child's family and other significant persons);
- to guide the process of ensuring long term solutions (return to biological family, long term foster care or adoption);
- to create mechanisms for the preparation of children placed in alternative care to leaving care and start their independent life.



TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

1) Foster Care

- by the specific needs of beneficiaries - “traditional”, “specialised”, “urgent” and “occasional” foster care
- by the age of beneficiaries - “foster care for children” and “foster care for adults”
- by the foster parent’s status - “kinship” and “non-kinship” foster parents.

Role of Social Welfare Centres:

- to provide training and professional support for foster families,
- to monitor the quality of foster care



TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

2) Guardianship - applies to children without adequate parental care in case the parents are:

- deceased, missing, unknown or their place of residence is unknown for at least a month,
- deprived of the right to parental care,
- deprived of legal capacity in the part that prevents them from realizing parental care,
- underage, and have not attained legal capacity by concluding a marriage,
- absent or prevented and are not able to take care of their child, and they have failed to confer the realization of parental care to a person who fulfils the conditions for a guardian or give consent for adoption.

- **special guardianship** - to protect child's specific personal and property rights and child's interests - representation.



TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

3) Kinship temporary care - parents can partially and/or temporary transfer their parental care to another person. If longer than thirty days, parents' statement needs to be certified by a Public Notary.

4) Residential care – children's homes and organized community living



TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

- **Temporary placement** (in emergency situations, for shorter rehabilitation programs, if parents are ill or suffer temporary life hardships)
- **Joint placement** (mothers during pregnancy and until child is one year old, victims of domestic violence and human trafficking).
- **Long term placement** (for a child without parents, child with disorders in psychological and physical development when it is not possible to organize care within the family)



EXISTING DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM

Responsible:	The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (as the ministry in charge of social welfare)
Reporting unit:	Centre for social welfare + homes for children
Reporting Methods:	Statistical form and application called SocSkrb
Foundations for data collection analysis:	Social Welfare Act, Official Statistics Act, and Annual Implementation Plan of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics



- **Register of Foster Families** – administrated through SocSkrb application, centres for social welfare enter the data on foster families; annual data processing; available in the Annual Report on the web site of the Ministry
- **Register of Foster Care Beneficiaries** – for children and adults - administrated through SocSkrb application
- **Register of Children in Institutions**– data gathered annually through Annual Report for the previous year in Excel form (data provided by the centres for social welfare); annual data processing; available in the Annual Report on the web site of the Ministry



- **Register of Children Involved in Preventative Programmes** – data delivered within analytic reports, data are not processed as a separate category
- **Register of Children in Monitoring (post return to the family)** – data delivered within analytic reports, data are not processed as a separate category
- **Register of Guardians and Special Guardians** – data delivered within analytic reports, data are not processed as a separate category



Challenges:

- weak cross-sectoral data administration and governance; data not comparable
- “invisible children” - not included in statistical reports
- data about children and youth placed in residential care - on December, 31st
- missing data/information on the total length of stay of a child in residential care
- no information on child’s movement through the system
- some data are reported cumulatively for children and youth (18+)
- methodological changes
- limited resources (human and financial)
- no clear linkage between data collected and policy development and modification



Progress:

- Mapping available social services and gaps on county level
- Mapping locations where children in care come from
- Cross-referencing data for identification of new service delivery
- Developing new application to track a child through care system
- Developing child wellbeing indicators and related data collection system



Ministry of Social Policy and Youth

Thank You!

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