



Early childhood interventions – cooperation, networking and dialogue to support families in need

Sabine Haas; Gesundheit Österreich, NZFH.at
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Austrian Model for Early Childhood Interventions



Objectives of the Austrian Model

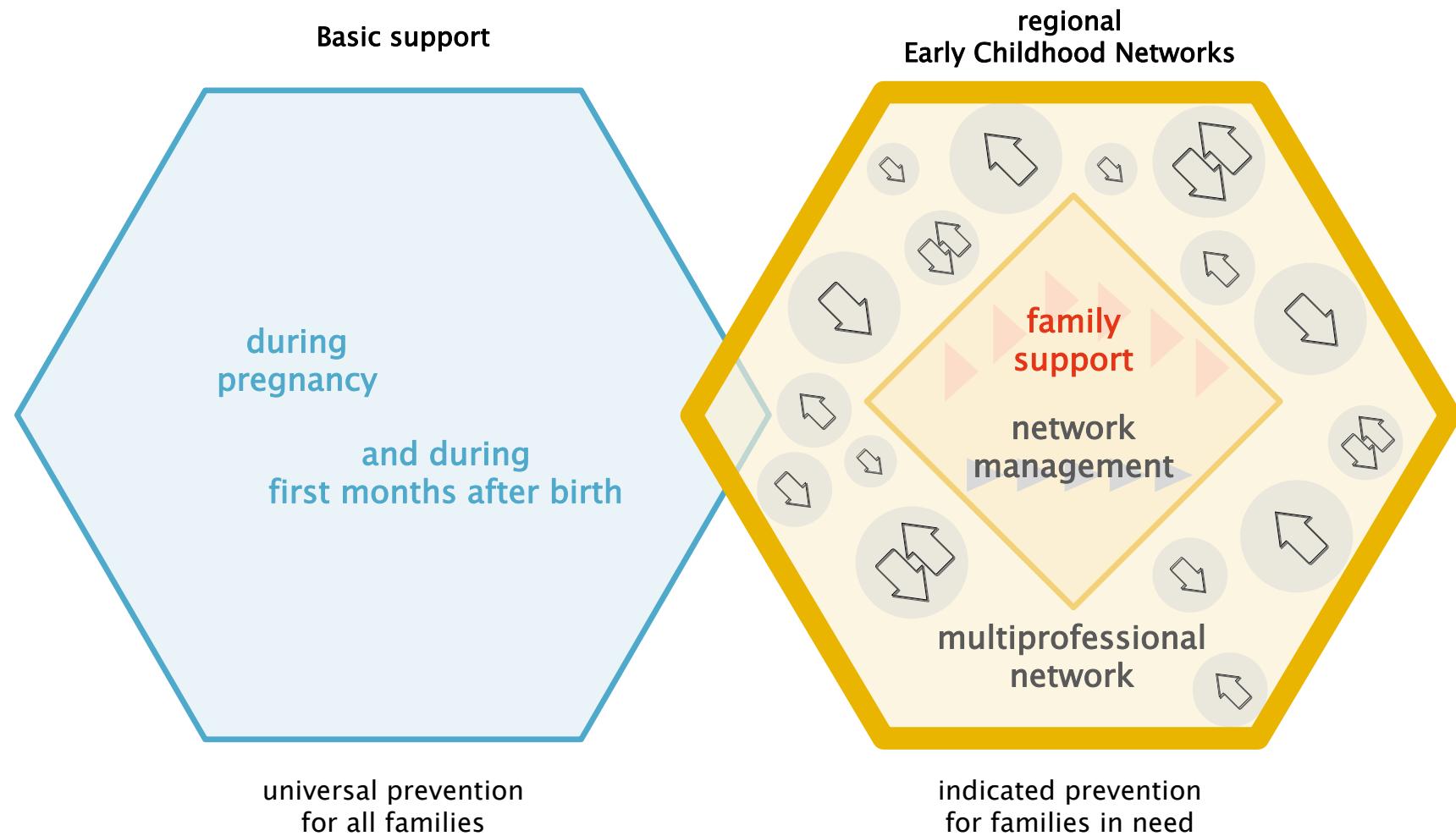
Specific Objectives:

- » To strengthen resources and reduce strains/burdens of families with children (0–3 years, maximum 6 years)
- » To promote and ensure well-being and development of children at an early stage
- » To contribute to a healthy growing up including the right on protection, promotion and participation
- » To promote health and social equity

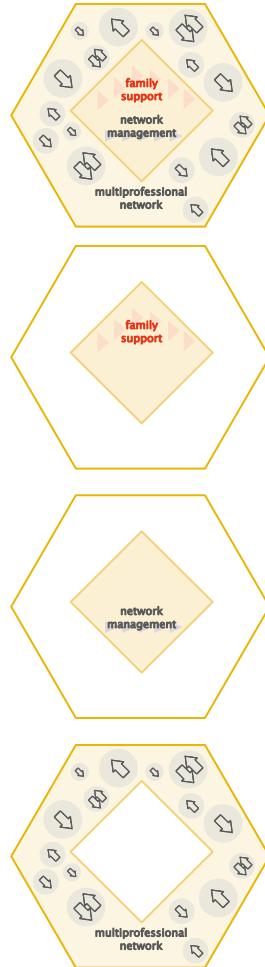
Guiding principles:

- Non-stigmatising, appreciative, resource-oriented
- Focus on empowerment
- voluntary and free of costs

Austrian Model for Early Childhood Interventions



Characteristics of Early Childhood Networks



reach families actively and systematically = Raising awareness among those who can identify and refer families in need

provide continuous and comprehensive support = family support (mostly as home visits) throughout a longer time span; builds up mutual trust; provides model for bonding; refers to specific services within the regional network one by one

general as well as case-related cooperation and networking = network-management for establishment and continuous maintenance of the regional network,

which serves as **multiprofessional support system**, offering well coordinated manifold services for parents and children

Target group: Families in need

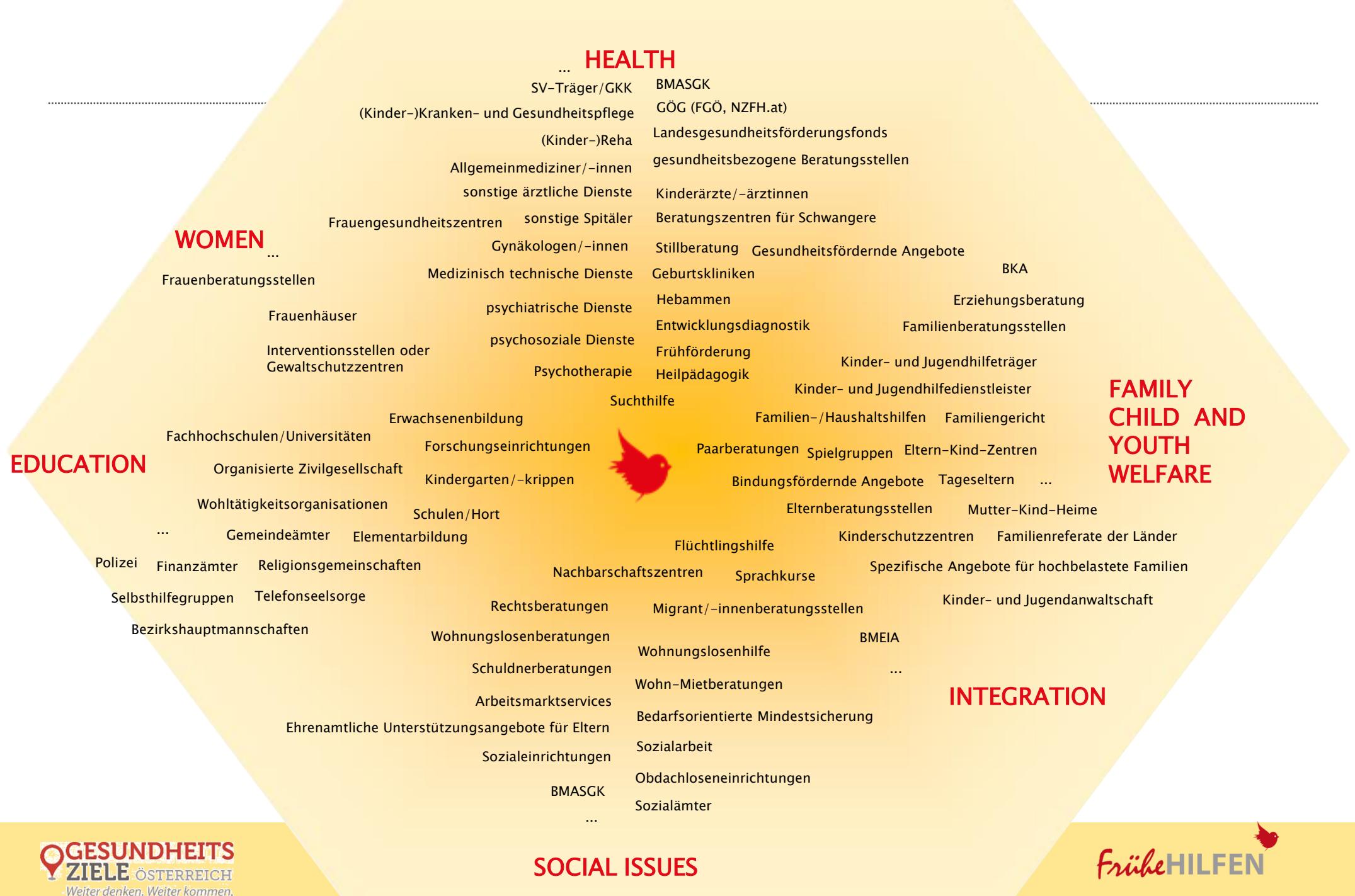
Families with a **variety of strains/burdens**:

- » Social burden, like financial distress, social isolation, inadequate housing, domestic violence
- » Mental burden, like mental illness/addiction, unwanted pregnancy
- » Specific characteristics of the parents, like minor-aged, single parent, disability or somatic chronic illness
- » Increased need for care of the child, like premature birth, multiple birth, mental retardation, congenital illness or disability
- » Strong anxiety concerning future of main attachment figure
- » Difficulties with acceptance of resp. care for the child, troubles with mother-/parent-child-interaction

But in most cases **several burdens** are present at the same time in combination with a **lack of compensating resources**; 7 % of all births and additional 10 % for short-term support

Multiprofessional network

Gesundheit Österreich
GmbH • • •



National Centre on Early Childhood Interventions (NZFH.at)

Austrian Public Health Institute commissioned with work on early childhood interventions since 2011

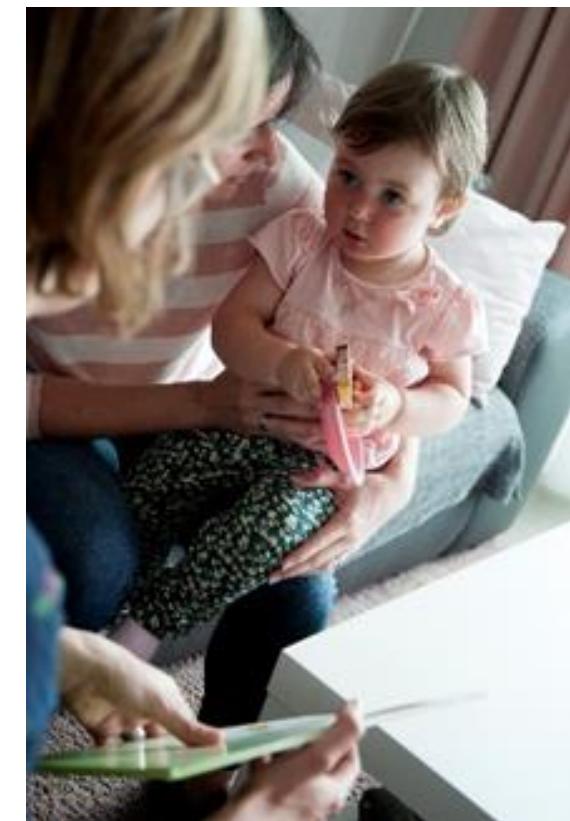
-> officially nominated as National Centre since 2015

Tasks:

- » Overall co-ordination with all involved regions/stake holders
- » Training, monitoring (unique documentation system) and networking
- » Harmonisation and quality assurance (guidelines, quality standard)
- » Evaluation/Research and further development of concept (e.g. participatory research, ad hoc papers for „burning“ issues)
- » Knowledge transfer (Website, News, conferences, articles ...)
- » Public relations



State of Implementation



Implementation of regional Early Childhood Networks

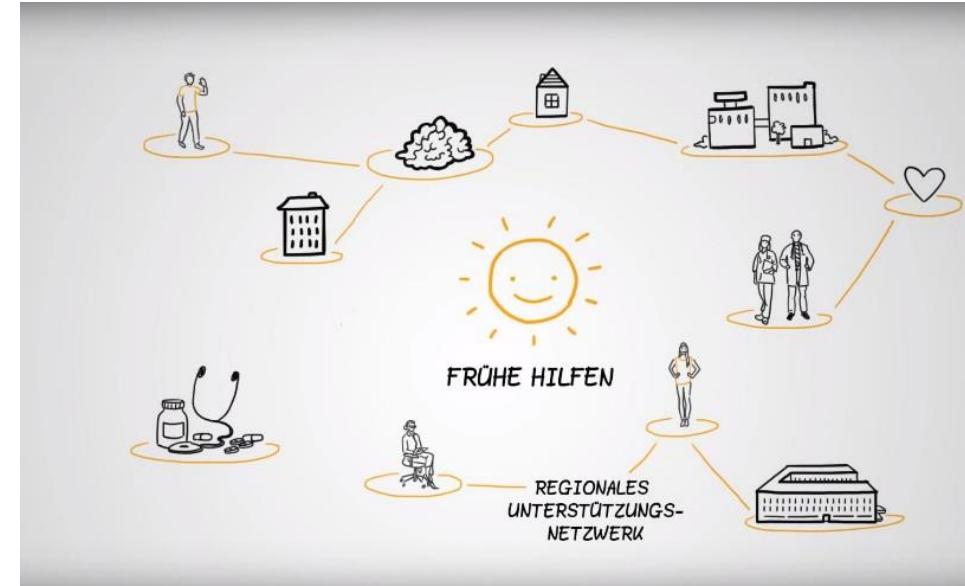
Implementation of the indicated prevention model
in all **9 Austrian provinces**
since the beginning of 2015

- » Cooperation of provincial governments and social insurance
- » Financing mainly through health budgets

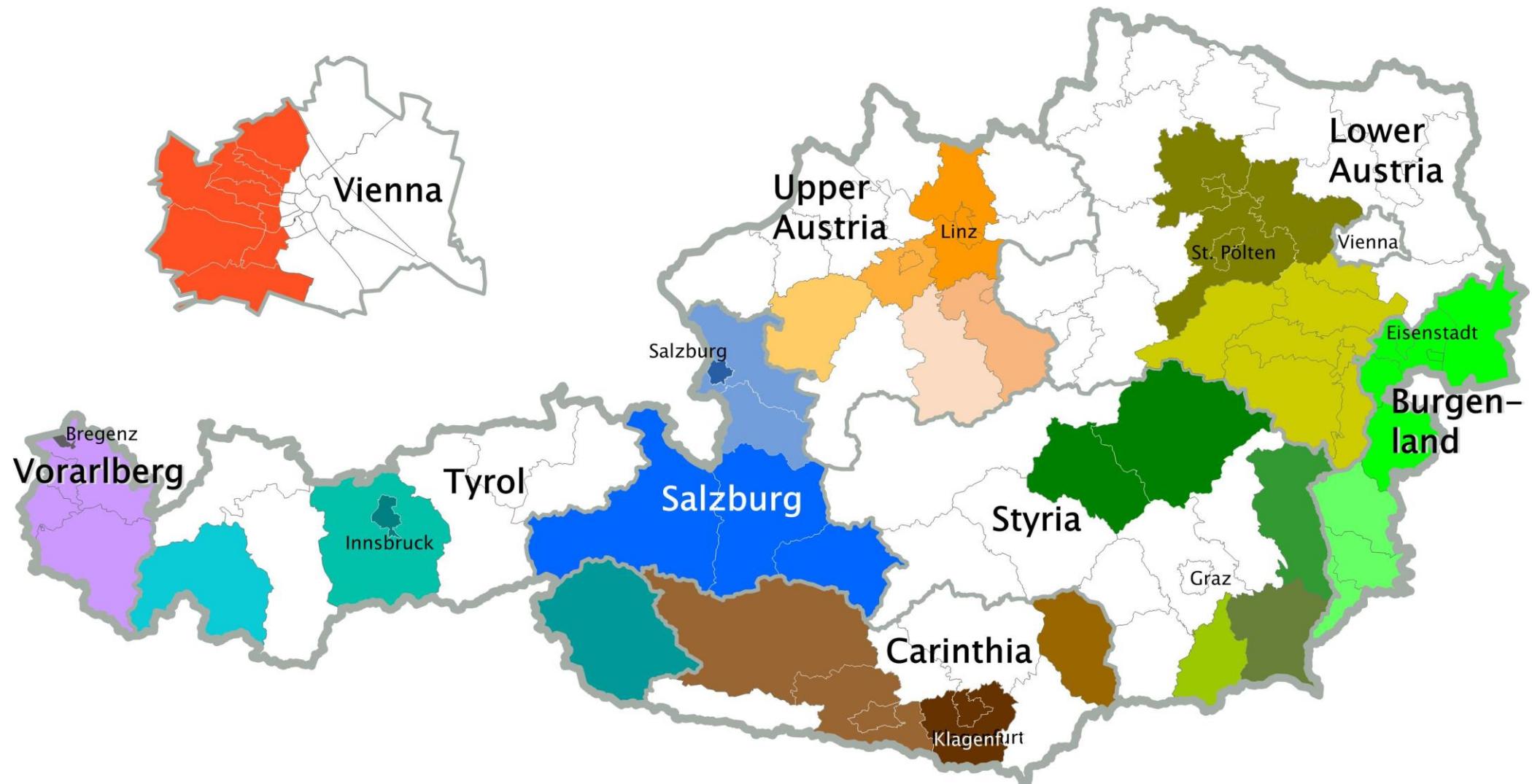
Spring 2019:

25 regional Early Childhood Networks, which cover in total **64 districts**

- More than half of the Austrian population lives within reach of regional Early Childhood Networks!



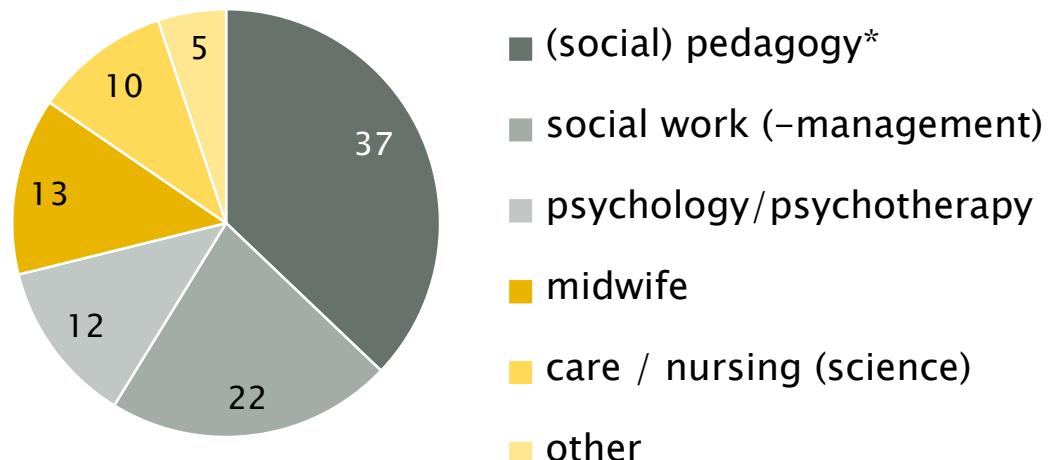
Regional Early Intervention Networks



Date: March 2019

Professional background (home visitors + networkmanagers)

Home visitors, 31th Dec 2018, in %, n = 86 (97)

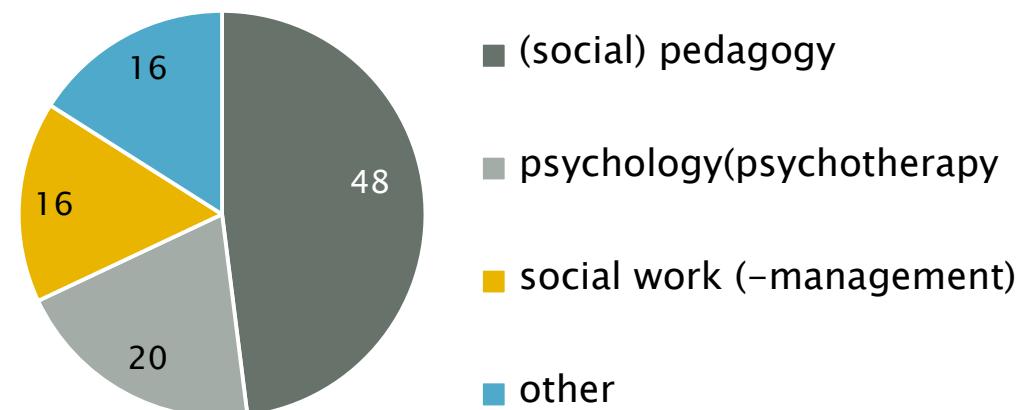


* incl. (day) nursery pedagogy, educational science

multiple answers possible

Source: NZFH.at, 2017

Networkmanagers, 31th Dec 2018,
in %, n = 23 (25)



Families reached (2015 – 2018)

~ 5.700 contacts



~ 3.800 families supported



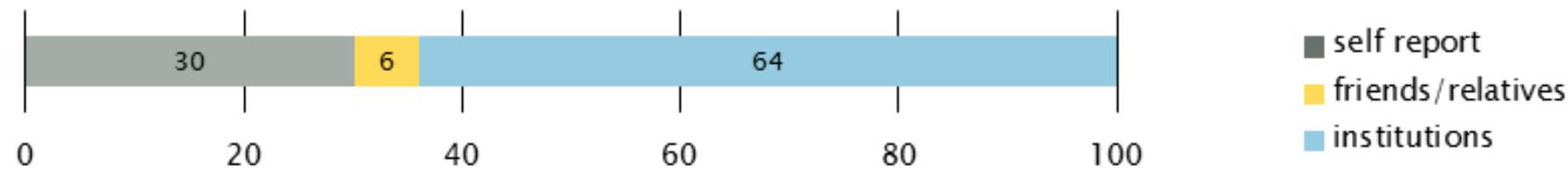
~ 2.750 families already
left the programme



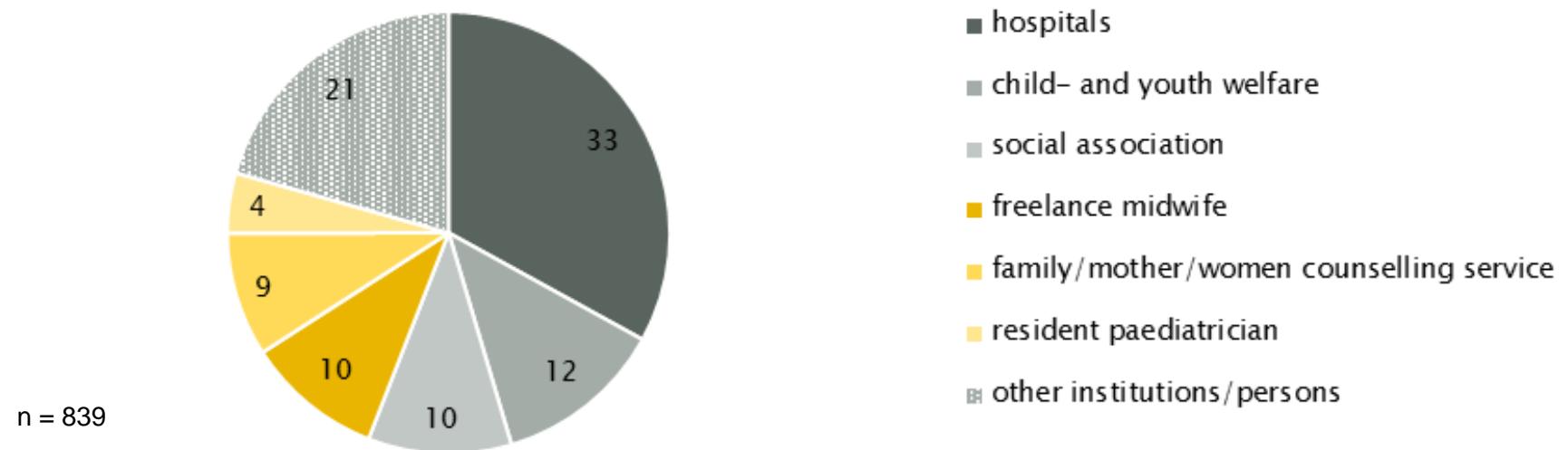
Experiences and results



Referrals by...



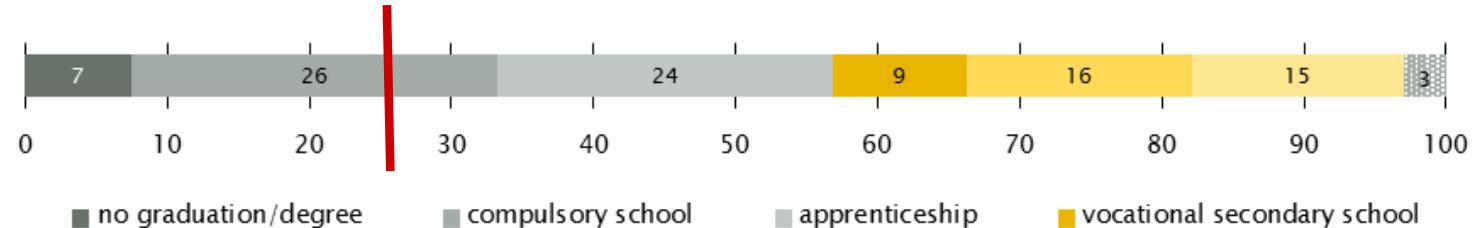
n = 1.311



Comment: 2017, in %

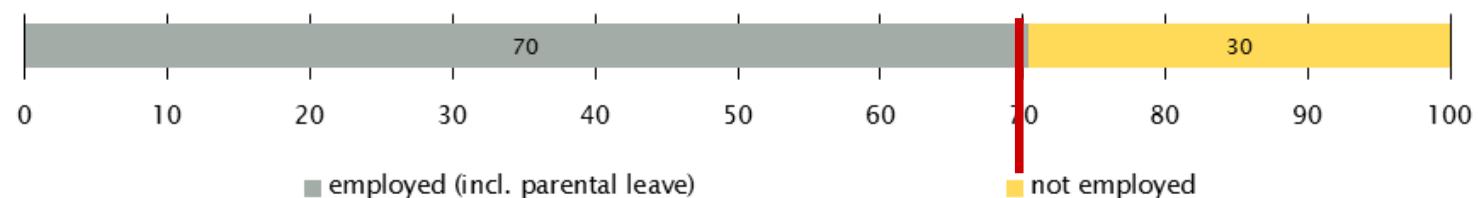
Characteristics of main caregivers

Education



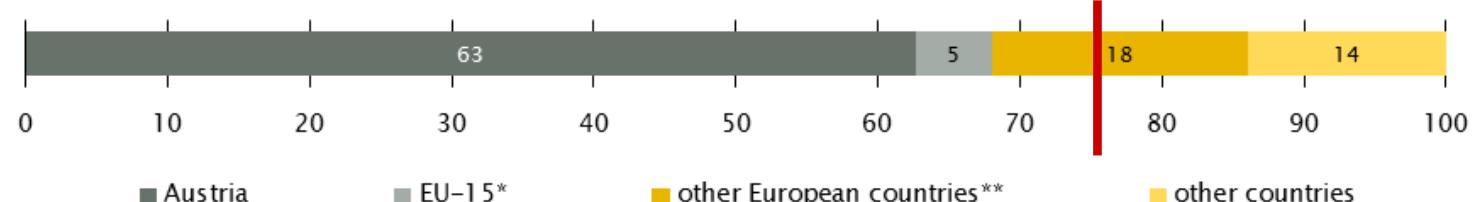
26 %

Employment



70 %

Country of birth



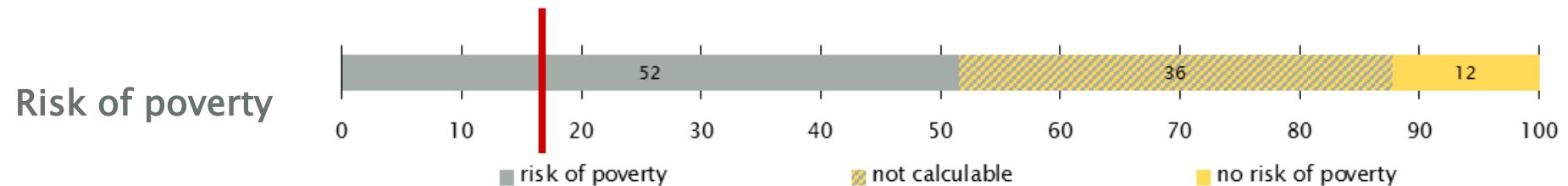
76 %

Comments:

2017, n=1.328/1.373/1.365 (main caregiver), in %

* EU-15 incl. Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland. ** other European countries incl. Turkey, Russia, ...

Socially disadvantaged families are supported



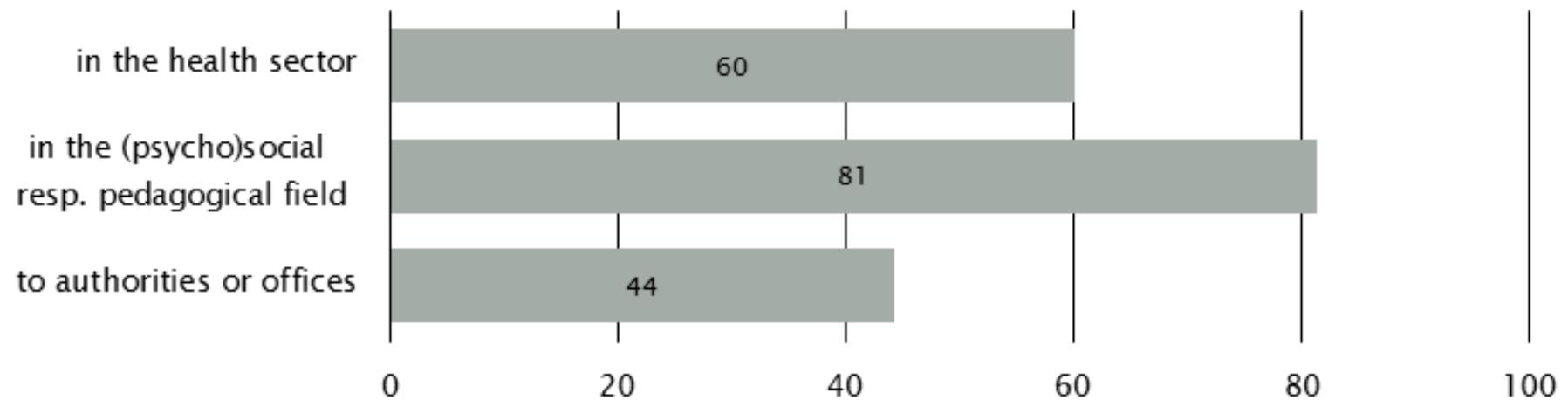
17 %



14 %

Comment:
2017, n=1.381/1.377, in %

70 % of families were referred to additional services



comment:

Terminated supports 2017, n=478, in %, multiple answers possible

EVALUATION: Families do benefit from early childhood intervention networks

Impact on health determinants (material, social and societal environment) by **increases in personal/available resources** as well as **reduction of strains/burdens**:

resources



- + self-esteem
- + health, health literacy
- + parenting skills,
parent-child-bonding
- + child development
- + familiar relations/atmosphere
- + social net
- + perspectives for parents life/future



strains/burdens

- anxiety and exhaustion
- financial burden/distress



Dialogue is key

- Dialogue in order to **build and maintain the regional network** involving all relevant partners (professional groups, institutions from health and social care ...) → bilateral talks, Round Tables, networking meetings ...
- Dialogue in order to ensure the **access of families to the programme** → motivational talks with families, direct contact to network by the involved professional groups
- Dialogue in order to ensure **needs-based support for the families** → assessment of needs of the families, referral to specific services, on-going exchange; consultation of members of multiprofessional team
- Dialogue in order to ensure **trust and relationship** between the families and the home visitors as well as **empowerment of the families**

Dialogue is key



... the home visitor already gave me a lot of strength, simply by listening and talking about herself ...



I've become more confident and I know that I'm doing the right thing with my child and that gives me good feedback ... that she also gives me courage when I'm not doing well at all.

Thank you for your attention!

Contact details

Sabine Haas, Gesundheit Österreich,

Stubenring 6, 1010 Vienna

T: +43 1 515 61 – 160

E: sabine.haas@goeg.at

www.goeg.at resp. www.fruehehilfen.at



Austrian Centre on
Early Childhood
Interventions
NZFH.at

Team NZFH.at

Sabine Haas (Head), Theresa Bengough,

Gabriele Gruber, Brigitte Juraszovich,

Klaus Kellner, Carina Marbler, Sophie Sagerschnig,

Theresia Unger, Marion Weigl, Petra Winkler, Menekse Yilmaz