



Executive summary of the public audit report

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE MINIMUM CHILD CARE MEASURES NECESSARY TO ENSURE CHILD SUPPORT

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Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website
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DEFINITIONS

Open youth centre¹ refers to an institution or its department, implementing direct open work with youth, providing social, pedagogical and psychological services. The owner or shareholder rights and duties of such institution belong to municipalities, non-governmental organisations, local or religious communities.

Institution of social services² refers to a company (stock company, closed joint stock company, individual company), institution (public institution, budget institution), organisation (association, charity and support fund, religious community or community (centre)) or a family providing social services.

Specialist refers to a person³ with specific qualifications of a psychologist, social educator, social worker, etc., providing support for a child.

Educational assistance institution⁴ refers to an institution, the major activity of which is providing educational assistance.

EMIS refers to education management information system.

Minimum child care measures⁵ refer to the obligation to a child, according to which the child is provided with education support, day social care and other services, without separating the child from the child's representatives according to the law.

A person implementing minimum child care measures⁶ refers to a natural or legal person, implementing a minimum child care measure according to the law.

Average child care measure⁷ refers to the obligation to a child, according to which the child is educated, taken care of, is provided with education support and other services at a children's socialization centre.

Child's representatives according to the law⁸ refer to the child's parents, foster parents, carers and other persons, who must take care of the child according to the law or any other legal act, educating, taking care and representing the child, defending the child's rights and legal interests.

Children's day care centre⁹ refers to a public legal person, implementing minimum child care measures, providing social and other services for families and (or) children at social risk.

Children's socialisation centre¹⁰ refers to a state secondary school, implementing the average child care measure.

Implementer refers to a person implementing the minimum child care measure.

1 The order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour No. A1-570 of 11-12-2012 "Regarding the approval of the description of the Open Youth Centres"

2 The Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania, 19-01-2006, No. X-493, Art. 2, pt. 10.

3 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 4.

4 The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, 25-06-1991, No. I-1489 (amendment of 17-03-2011, No. XI-1281), Art. 2, pt. 28.

5 The Law on Minimum and Average Care of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania No. X-1238 of 28-06-2007 (amendment of 14-12-2010, No. XI-1232), Art. 2, pt. 9.

6 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 8.

7 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 10.

8 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 6.

9 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 11.

10 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 12.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Law on Minimum and Average Care of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted on 27 June 2007 and its amendment came into force as of 1 January 2011. One of the purposes of the law is to create a system of minimum care measures for educating and providing children with behaviour disorders with social support, which will help them to overcome their behaviour disorders and develop an understanding of a meaningful life¹¹.

The implementation of the minimum child care measures will determine the achievement of positive behavioural changes of the child and the development of values and social skills that meet the expectations of the society and which will eventually help the children become good, independent and responsible citizens.

In 2013 we performed a public audit on the *Effectiveness of Children's Socialisation Centres*¹² and found out that in about 50% of the cases, the average child care measure was applied (the children were directed to children's socialisation centres) due to lack of results in the minimum child care measures. This reason encouraged us to inspect the implementation of the minimum child care measures.

The purpose of the audit is to assess the efficiency of the minimum child care.

During the audit we have assessed the following;

- if the amount of information gathered to make the decision regarding the minimum child care measure is enough;
- if the choice of the implementers is made according to the individual needs of a child;
- if the family of the child receiving minimum child care measure receives support;
- if the minimum child care measures restricting freedom meet the purpose defined by the law — to help the child;
- if the municipal monitoring of the implementation of the minimum child care measures is efficient;
- if the Ministry of Education and Science evaluates the implementation of the minimum child care measures;
- if the child welfare committees under municipality administrations receive methodical assistance and ensure the qualification development of their members.

Audited subjects:

- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania;
- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

During the audit we gathered data at:

- The National Centre for Special Needs Education and Psychology;
- The Centre of Information Technologies in Education;
- 9 municipality administrations (Vilnius city, Kaunas city, Klaipėda city, Marijampolė, Jonava district, Molėtai district, Šilalė district, Širvintos district, Anykščiai district) and 21 institution in their territories, implementing the minimum child care measures (secondary schools, high schools, progymnasiums, youth, vocational schools, pedagogical psychological services, open youth centres, child care homes, social support and service centres);
- the questionnaire was sent to all municipality administrations.

¹¹ The Law on Minimum and Average Care of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania, Art. 1, pt. 1.

¹² Public audit report of 29-07-2013 No. VA-P-50-11-40 *The Effectiveness of Children's Socialisation Centres*.

The audit covered the period of 2011-2013.

Despite the decrease of the number of pupils at schools during the audit period (542 512 in 2011, 490 899 in 2013), the number of children using minimum child care services increased. In 2011 these measures were used by 651, in 2013 — by 776 children.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The general list of documents, necessary to apply minimum child care measures, is unconfirmed, therefore there is no guarantee that the information gathered for making an individualised decision regarding the application of a specific measure is sufficient (chapter 1).
2. The choice of the implementers of a minimum child care measure does not sufficiently take into account the individual needs of the children, because:
 - 2.1. the most common choice of the implementer is a school, which usually has already used up all of its educational assistance measures (chapter 2);
 - 2.2. the access to specialised support for children living in cities and villages is unequal — rural areas lack of institutions that could be appointed as implementers, as well as social and educational support programs focused on children with behavioural issues, also the implementation of minimum child care measures does not receive targeted funding (chapter 2);
 - 2.3. the appointment of the child's representatives as the implementer does not ensure the implementation of the rights and duties of the implementer of the minimum child care measures (if the representatives of the child do not participate in the implementation of the minimum child care measure, they should inform the local child protection division of the child's permanent place of residence) (chapter 2).

For these reasons it is impossible to ensure the efficiency of the minimum child care measures.
3. Since the support for the representatives of the child receiving minimum child care measure is not regulated, the support they receive may be insufficient thus making the result of the minimum child care measures — short-term or unachieved (chapter 3).
4. There is no defined procedure of organising the monitoring of the implementation of the minimum child care measures (consultations for the implementers of the measures and the representatives of the child, provision of the necessary support for them and the child, control and analysis of the reports regarding the implementation of the minimum child care support measures), which results in insufficient cooperation between institutions appointing and implementing the measure, insufficient work with the family and environment of the child and insufficient conditions for achieving positive results (chapters 2, 3, 5).
5. The minimum child care measures that restrict freedom (curfew, obligation not to visit places that have a negative impact on child's behaviour or obligation to refrain from communicating with people that have a negative impact on child's behaviour, obligation to implement educational activities) do not meet the purpose defined by the Law on Minimum and Average Care of the Child — to provide support for the child — and thus do not create appropriate preconditions for the child to develop the concepts of meaningful individual and public life (chapter 4).

6. The monitoring of the implementation of the minimum child care measures implemented by municipalities is insufficient, because it does not ensure that the implementers submit the reports of the implementation of measures on time, the reports lack sufficient analysis and evaluation of the efficiency of the measures applied, there is no defined and approved form for submitting the results of the implementation of the minimum child care measures and this results in inability to ensure their greater effect (chapter 5).
7. Child welfare committees under municipalities are not obliged to discuss the measure with the child and the child's representatives after the implementation term is over. Therefore, the child may not understand why the measures are extended or terminated and has no opportunity to be heard, also the child and the implementers of the measures do not receive any feedback about the implementation of the measure (chapter 5).
8. The methodological support for child welfare committees at municipalities does not always meet the municipalities' expectations; there are no examples of good practice or recommendations for the implementation of each minimum child care measure, which results in lack of preconditions to increase the efficiency of these measures (chapter 6).
9. The Ministry of Education and Science has not defined any efficiency criteria of the minimum child care measures and thus cannot evaluate the implementation of the minimum child care measures, nor make any evidence-based decisions to increase the efficiency of the minimum child care measures (chapter 7).

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Ministry of Education and Science:

1. In order to make sure that enough information is gathered for making an individualised decision regarding the application of minimum child care measures for a child and appropriate choice of the implementers, it is necessary to prepare a general list of recommended documents, required for the application of minimum child care measures (conclusion 1).
2. In order to ensure that all measures defined by the law meet the goal to help a child to develop the concepts of meaningful individual and public life and, considering the fact that the minimum child care measures that restrict freedom are applied relatively rarely and that the process of their implementation is complicated, to suggest to eliminate them from the law (conclusion 5).
3. In order to create an efficient system of minimum child care, it is necessary to:
 - 3.1. regulate the monitoring of the implementation of the minimum child care measures: to provide consultations and the necessary support for the implementers of the measure and the representatives of the child, also ensure the control and analysis of the reports of the implementation of the minimum child care measures (conclusions 2 and 4);
 - 3.2. approve the form for reports of the implementation of the minimum child care measures (conclusion 6);
 - 3.3. regulate the participation of the child, the child's representatives and the implementers of measures in the meeting of the child welfare committee during the assessment of the efficiency of the measure applied (conclusion 7).

4. In order to ensure more efficient support for municipalities regarding the implementation of the minimum child care measures:
 - 4.1. to accumulate and distribute the good practice of the implementation of the minimum child care measures (conclusion 8);
 - 4.2. to prepare the recommendations for the implementation of the minimum child care measures (conclusion 8);
 - 4.3. to keep improving the qualifications of the members working in the child welfare committee under municipalities (conclusion 8);
5. In order to improve the results of the minimum care, to evaluate the implementation of the minimum care according to reliable and precise information provided by municipalities, regarding the measures and their efficiency (conclusion 9).

For the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania:

In order to achieve greater efficiency of the minimum child care measures, it is necessary to regulate the family and child support measures (conclusion 3). The recommendation implementation plan is provided in the appendix No. 2.