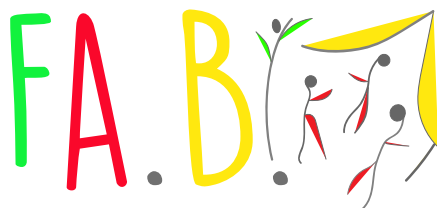


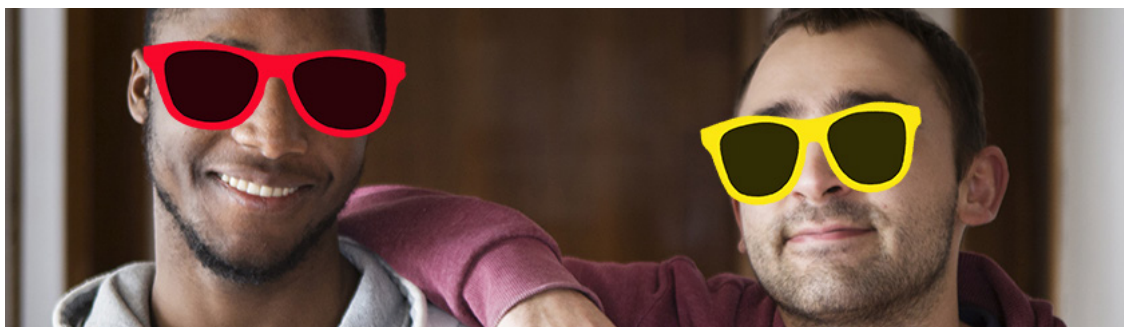


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FAMILY BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN IN MIGRATION

EVERYONE DESERVES AFFECTION AND SUPPORT IN GROWING INTO ADULTHOOD



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# GUIDELINES TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PROFESSIONALS, FOSTER FAMILIES AND UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS





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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the “FA.B! Family Based care for children in migration”, financed by the AMIF - Asylum, Migration and Integration fund and aimed at strengthening the family reception system for unaccompanied foreign minors, a set of guidelines and recommendations has been drawn up regarding the various aspects of the family fostering process, in order to: provide adequate assistance to the needs of lonely minors; equip guardians, curators, social workers and professionals with specific knowledge and skills to understand in depth the vulnerabilities of minors and achieve successful foster care; improve the quality of national and local reception systems for unaccompanied foreign minors.

The recommendations are the result of a multidisciplinary work of maximization and capitalization of skills carried out by the partners of the project - Center for Information Documentation Initiative for Development (CIDIS); Hope For Children Crc Policy Center (HFC); Kentro Merimnas Oikogeneias Kai Paidiou (KMOP); Foundation for Initiatives and the Study of Multi-ethnicity (ISMU); Porcausa De Investigacion Y Periodismo (porCausa); Jesuit Refugee Service Malta Foundation (JRS MALTA) - which operate in the field of reception, assistance and integration of unaccompanied foreign minors in five European countries of the Mediterranean area (Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Malta, Greece).

The guidelines formulated are as follows:

- Guidelines training programs for professionals, foster families and unaccompanied foreign minors;
- Common child communication policy;
- Guidelines on instruments and technique for children’s participation;
- Recommendation on Assessing multi-stakeholders engagement effectiveness;
- Recommendation on methodologies and tailored services for vulnerable groups.

Guidelines, for the national training programs for professional and foster families provide guidelines and directions regarding training courses for operators, unaccompanied foreign minors and foster families and are usable, both in the national and European context, by teachers, trainers and training institutions.

The guidelines represent an orientation tool in the construction phase of the training courses, aimed at identifying which elements are indispensable to carry out a good training intervention, from both a content and a methodological point of view.

The guidelines are also conceived as a transversal tool, which can be used to define common quality standards and to guarantee a constant process of ex ante and ex post evaluation starting from a shared and codified basis of argumentative and procedural indications.

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# GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS

For the realization of a good training, have been organized and codified in four general macro-areas:

- **Framework:** the structure of an educational setting, i.e. the structured context within which the training takes place, understood both as a physical space and as a relational space;
- **Contents:** the program and contents of the training;
- **Methodology:** the ways in which it is appropriate to conduct training courses, that is the set of theoretical foundations underlying the educational strategies;
- **Attitudes:** the professional attitudes which favor the success of the training program and which mainly concern the cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes of the trainer.

The four macro-areas are addressed on the basis of the particular training needs of the recipients of the training as for each category of subjects involved in the training it is necessary to build training courses related to the specific needs expressed, especially as regards contents, methodologies and professional attitudes.

## Framework

In order to ensure a functional, efficient and flexible educational setting, it is useful:

- to have a structured program that clearly indicates the methods and times for carrying out the training;
- to predict the use of multiple training delivery methods, including remote training to allow maximum participation of the professionals involved, without prejudice to the preference for face-to-face meetings, more able to encourage the involvement of all participants;
- to prepare a functional communication plan between trainers and participants, for the correct and rapid receipt of information relating to the courses.

## Contents

In order to propose contents that are concretely useful to operators, able to connect specific cognitive needs, with reference to the different professional roles assumed in the assignment project, and general cognitive needs, relating to the relevant legislation and system aspects, it is essential:

- a clear and well-defined reconstruction regarding the legal framework and the legal procedures for setting up and monitoring a foster care project; to clarify the specific elements with respect to family foster care of UFM (unaccompanied foreign minors); types of foster care; the custody process; the methodological tools;
- an in-depth study of the role assumed by each person involved in the assignment project, to clearly define the tasks to be performed and the skills to be boosted;
- a support for the acquisition of intercultural skills, essential for building a relationship with minors, attentive to the specific cultural characteristics of which they are carriers and to activate adequate responses;
- provide initial assessment tools (both for minors and families), ongoing monitoring and final evaluation of foster care experiences to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

## Methodology

As regards the ways in which it is appropriate to conduct training courses dedicated to social workers, in consideration of previous knowledge and skills and how these can influence the reading of the phenomena and, therefore, the responses put in place, it is advisable:

- to build contents based on the theory-practice relationship to create programs that adhere to the reality of the different operational situations. Therefore, it is useful to propose and discuss case studies, useful for orienting in the complexity of real situations, providing supportive teaching materials;
- to provide for moments of discussion and reflection on the

topics learned through the preparation of round tables and conferences;

- to enhance and encourage networking between the operators involved through the use of teaching methodologies aimed at strengthening the group, namely:
  - ◆ cooperative learning for the shared construction of procedures and tools with a view to achieving a common result;
  - ◆ team building to improve the ability to work in a team;
  - ◆ role playing to understand in depth the dynamics of the operator / user relationship;
  - ◆ to plan multidisciplinary programs that favor a "mixed training" capable of involving the various professional figures;
  - ◆ to start from the knowledge/skills of the participants both for their enhancement and, if necessary, to work on the prejudices/preconceptions that mediate the reading of the phenomena;

## Attitudes

As for the professional attitudes that favor the success of the training program for the operators, it is preferable to experiment with an educational approach as much as possible:

- not executive but cooperative, able to involve operators in the construction of innovative professional tools and methodologies capable of responding to the needs of constantly changing contexts;
- flexible, i.e. able to place the learner at the center of the training process, enhancing his/her skills and professional experience;
- able to stimulate a process of "enabling activation", i.e. a process aimed at mobilizing, activating and enhancing the resources, skills, abilities and knowledge already possessed by the operator.



# GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINING OF FOSTER FAMILIES

## Framework

To ensure an educational setting that is functional to the relational needs of foster families and, at the same time, structured and organized, it is useful:

- to have a well-planned program that clearly indicates the methods and timing of the training;
- to provide for the use of multiple training delivery methods, including remote training, while favoring at the same time face-to-face meetings that better allow for mutual knowledge and the sharing of opinions, expectations and fears;
- to organize a functional communication plan between trainers and participants, for the correct and rapid receipt of information relating to the courses;
- to provide a comfortable environment in which it is possible to face and share doubts and fears related to the experience being faced.

## Contents

In order to offer content suitable for the training needs of families, regarding both the formal aspects of the assignment project - legislation, duties, professional figures involved - and the psycho-social aspects, it is essential:

- to provide clear information regarding the foster care project and the laws on the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors;
- to clarify the system of services that are in charge of the UFM, the specific competences and responsibilities;
- to help families clarify, re-elaborate and support the reasons for their choice of availability for foster care;
- to deepen the role, therefore the specific tasks and duties, of the various socio-educational figures that rotate around the minor

and with whom the families interact, so as to clearly define their respective tasks and duties in the context of taking charge of the minor;

- to provide families with clear indications on what their tasks, roles and responsibilities are;
- to provide foster families with useful information to decode the needs of minors, namely: migration contexts, objectives related to migration projects, critical issues related to the migration experience;
- to support foster families in the acquisition of intercultural communication skills, in order to strengthen their aptitude for listening and managing cultural diversity;
- to provide tools to manage any relationship with other minors in the family and with the extended family network;
- to provide families with tools for the symbolic and concrete management of the child's relationship with the family of origin.

## Methodology

As regards the ways in which it is appropriate to conduct training courses dedicated to foster families, taking into account the particular emotional tension that characterizes the foster care experience, it is appropriate:

- to encourage the building of bonds of knowledge and trust between the participating families, also in order to create groups for discussion and mutual support, self-organized or supported by the bodies involved in the project;
- to provide for moments and spaces dedicated to the emotional support of foster families;
- to organize moments in which families can exchange representations, fantasies and stereotypes regarding foster care;
- to use a laboratory teaching method, useful for promoting meaningful and contextualized learning, also through the presentation and discussion of life stories and the use of participatory techniques;
- to encourage participation as co-educators of families who

have already successfully experienced the reception of an UFS in the family, not only to tell their personal experience, but also to help other families feel free to express, share and discuss fears, expectations, any positive and negative prejudices.

## Attitudes

As regards the professional attitudes that favor the success of a training program sensitive to the specific needs of welcoming and listening to foster families, it is preferable:

- to adopt a relational approach based on active listening of families, to respond to the specific needs for knowledge and orientation they express;
- to experiment an empathic approach, in order to create a relationship of trust and collaboration with foster families;
- to encourage the free expression of families, avoiding a judgmental approach, welcoming and valuing the expression of doubts and fears as tools for increasing the awareness of the whole group in training.

# GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINING OF UNACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINORS

## Framework

To build an educational setting functional to the particular needs of unaccompanied foreign minors, in addition to what has already been indicated above, it is particularly useful:

- to provide adequate physical spaces for listening and training the child, structuring settings that are not overly formal or rigid.

## Contents

In order to offer contents adequate to the informative and emotional needs of the unaccompanied foreign minor, taking into account the overlapping of practical, legal and psychological aspects in the entrusting process, it is essential:

- to provide detailed information regarding the foster care project, in particular timing, actions and purposes, making the minor an active part of the care process;
- to inform minors of the rights and duties they hold, to foster a process of awareness and emancipation;
- to reflect on the possible critical issues connected to the creation of a relational bond with the foster family, in order to be able to deal with possible situations of unease in a protected space.

## Methodology

As regards the ways in which it is appropriate to conduct training courses dedicated to unaccompanied foreign minors, in consideration of their age and the need to reconstruct their own experience and migration history, it is appropriate to use:

- a laboratory teaching method that favors active learning based on reciprocal dialogue;
- peer education methodologies to generate spaces within which the minor can express himself freely;
- methodologies such as the circle time capable of promoting

the free expression of ideas, opinions, feelings and personal experiences, in an atmosphere of sharing and trust;

## Attitudes

As for the professional attitudes that favor the success of the training program aimed at unaccompanied foreign minors, especially considering the importance of welcoming and listening, it is essential:

- to adopt a non-judgmental approach, welcoming and respecting the personal, social, cultural and religious condition of the minor;
- to base the relationship on active listening of the child, to let the uniqueness of the individual experiences related to the migratory experience emerge;
- to use an educational approach that is not depositary but problematizing, i.e. one that stimulates discussion on the problems that have emerged;
- to approach training in a dialogical, two-way manner and with openness to the unexpected and the teach - back coming from the students;
- to foster and strengthen the knowledge/skills/attitudes of the young participants in a perspective of empowerment.

# LEARN MORE ABOUT FAMILY BASED CARE FOR YOUNG UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANTS AND FA.B! ACTIONS



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