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**"SUPERVISION OF FOSTER PARENTS"**  
**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**  
**- Postgraduate course of life-long learning -**

**PROPOSED EDUCATION PROGRAM – CURRICULUM**

**Education plan and program**

**Introduction**

The objectives of the foster parents educational program are based on the need for enhancing the quality of accommodation of children in foster families through the improvement and development of a network of expert support to foster parents.

Quality enhancement of expert support to foster parents will be realized through educational programs for professionals in social welfare centers, junior researchers at the University of Zagreb, as well as professionals from the Croatian civil sector for **the supervision of foster parents**.

The need for educating experts on the supervision of foster parents has been identified in the framework of the «Training of Experts, Professionals and foster parents in the area of foster care in the Republic of Croatia» project. This project aims at developing a new model of foster care in the Republic of Croatia which would represent a quality alternative to institutional accommodation and would be based on the adjustment of good practice patterns in the field of foster care in the Kingdom of Sweden and would be realized in cooperation with the Göteborg University, the Center for Social Care Larijendolen and private foster care agencies in Falkoping and Stockholm.

## **Stakeholders in Charge of Education of Experts in Supervision of Foster Parents**

Department for Social Work at the University of Göteborg in Stockholm, Center for Social Policy Initiatives in Zagreb, Croatia and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia.

### **Duration of the Educational Program**

The “Supervision of Foster Parents” educational program lasts 4 semesters. Teaching will be organized in the form of lectures, regular supervisions of foster parents, supervision of supervisors and meta-supervision. A special, hands-on part of the program will include regular supervisions of foster parents run by participants. Progress will be evaluated and further theoretical knowledge and supervisory skills will be gained through the supervision of supervisors (course participants). By way of meta-supervision the quality of the participants’ practical work, i.e., the supervisors’ work with course participants will be evaluated.

### **Purpose of the Educational Program**

Improvement of professional support to foster parents through the education of experts on the supervision of foster parents.

### **General Educational Objective**

Enhancement of the quality of foster care accommodation through the provision of foster parents supervision as a specific method of targeted professional support.

### **Specific Objectives**

- Educating groups of experts in providing a new form of foster parents support through supervision
- Setting up a group of foster parents that will get support through supervision
- Creation of an educational program for experts on the supervision of foster parents
- Preparing a package of educational materials on the supervision of foster parents

## **Target Group**

Participants in the educational program will include:

- 30 professionals from social welfare centers
- 4 assistant lecturers/ junior researchers at the University of Zagreb (Faculty of Law, Department for Social Work, Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitational Sciences)
- 1 professional from the civil sector – Center for Social Policy Initiatives

## **Enrolment Requirements**

Enrolment requirements for the “Supervision of Foster Parents” educational program are as follows:

- a bachelor’s degree in one of the following fields: social work, psychology, social pedagogy, educational rehabilitation (defectology)
- 3 years of experience in working directly with social care users
- participation in the education project «Training of Experts, Professionals and foster parents in the area of foster care in the Republic of Croatia»
- work in foster care at the center for social welfare
- knowledge of the English language (is desirable)
- recommendation letter from the mentor and director (for university and civil sector candidates)

**Application File** should contain:

- bachelor’s degree
- résumé with special emphasis on work experience with foster parents
- evidence of further professional education
- certificate of citizenship

## **Teaching Methods**

- interactive teaching: lectures; group work; office hours; course materials
- “exercises”/ practical work – supervision of foster parents
- supervision of supervisors (course participants)
- meta-supervision
- studies/ going over prescribed literature
- composition of final paper/ essay

## **Course Contents**

- social and psychosocial work: definition, theory and practice
- supervision of psychosocial work and supervision of foster families/ theory and practice
- supervision/ support and control – potential conflict of interest/ roles? (how to distinguish between/ deal with multiple roles)
- group dynamics
- family dynamics
- foster care: social structure and foster care/ foster care and the local community network/ foster family dynamics
- sex and gender roles
- ethics and method of foster parent supervision

## **Expected Course Results**

- group of experts (35) qualified to provide a new form of support through supervision
- group of foster parents (200) who are beneficiaries of supervision services
- educational program for experts in providing support to foster parents through supervision
- preparing educational materials

### *Competencies acquired by participants at the end of the course*

The “Supervision of Foster Parents” educational program educates and prepares candidates for independent supervision of foster parents.

The educational program on foster parents supervision as a specific support method ensures the following competencies of participants:

- knowledge and skills required for starting, following up and concluding the foster parents supervision process;
- knowledge and skills which enable participants to apply an analytical approach when confronted with problems in the family;
- independent decision-making and solving simple problems in the framework of supervision planning and management;
- enhanced perception and reflection skills indispensable for analyzing problems encountered by foster parents as well as one’s own work and for learning in groups of participants;

- ability to work in a multidisciplinary team; knowledge of/ understanding of the basic terminology of other professions (terminology related to the child, family, foster family and supervision); respect for other professions, experts and their expert opinions;
- improved communication and other inter-personal skills in relation to clients (foster parents, families), including the ability to adapt the language of profession to that of foster parents/ paraprofessionals;
- ability to form a close professional relationship supervisor – foster parents; understanding of the development of interpersonal relationship within the framework of the supervision process;
- the ethical component of planning, managing and informing on the supervision process, which includes: respect for the integrity, needs and privacy of persons included in the supervision process (foster parents, children, colleagues), having in mind best interest of the child, and continuous work on the improvement of one's own knowledge and skills needed for effective supervision;
- knowledge of and ability to use Croatian and English professional terminology, from the field of psychosocial work and supervision, in spoken and written form;
- participant's ability to link the knowledge and skills on supervision with his undergraduate studies;
- enhanced perception, understanding and respect for diversity;
- ability to work in a multicultural team.

### **Form of Examination/ End-program Evaluation of Acquired Knowledge and Skills**

In order for the candidate to receive his/ her certificate/ degree in the field of SUPERVISION OF FOSTER PARENTS, examination of knowledge and skills acquired in this field is organized in both individual and group/ oral form.

Written assignments/ essays will be defended individually and in groups.

The final examination grade will be based on:

- self-evaluation,
- peer/ collaborators' assessment and
- supervisor's assessment.

After passing the final exam candidates will receive a certificate/ diploma and a supplement describing course contents and methods, specifying the number of hours spent in the educational process of foster parents supervision.

## **Literature:**

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Juul, J.(2001): Your Competent Child: Toward New Basic Values for the Family. Educa, Zagreb. (Croatian)

Killen, K. (2001): Betrayed: Abused Children are Responsibility of All of Us. Society for Psychological Assistance, Zagreb. (Croatian)

Kobolt, A. (ur.) (2004): Methods and Techniques of Supervision. Pedagoška fakulteta – Faculty of Education, Ljubljana. (Slovenian)

Oosten, N., van der Vlugt, I. (2004): Gender and sex in psychosocial work. Society for Psychological Assistance, Zagreb. (Croatian)

Starke, M. (2003): A Different Parenthood? Department of Social Work and Pediatrics, Goteborg University, Goteborg.

## **Plan of Activities**

### **Summary**

#### ***Seminars/ Lectures***

2006 – 3 seminars/ 11 days

2007 – 5 seminars/ 13 days

2008 – 2 seminars/ 4 days

#### ***Practical Work – Foster Parents Supervision***

Experts in social welfare centres – foster parents supervision during working hours

- group of foster parents/ twice a month
- foster family/ once a month

#### ***Practical Work – Supervision of Supervisors***

Participants in the educational program on foster parents supervision – 16 supervisory meetings

2006: October, November, December

2007: February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November, December

2008: February, March, April, May

*Meta- supervision for supervisors of supervisors – 10 meetings in total*

2006: 2 times

2007: 5 times

2008: 3 times

## **Seminar/ Lecture Content and Timetable**

**2006**

### *First Seminar – June 2006*

Duration: 3 days

Subject framework:

- Theory of social and psychosocial work
- Theory and definition of supervision – supervision in psychosocial work and foster parents supervision
- Relationship between supervision and other support methods
- Foster care: social context, foster family, local community network, motivational aspect

### *Second Seminar – September 2006*

Duration: 4 days

Subject framework:

- The multiple roles of experts: support and control
- The place of supervision in between support and control
- Motivation of foster parents for supervision
- How to start foster parents supervision
  
- Start work on drafting the examination/ final thesis (office hours)
- Supervisors of supervisors participate in the seminar on the final day

### *Third Seminar – December 2006*

Seminar duration: 4 days

Subject framework:

- Methods and techniques of supervision in psychosocial work
- General and specific knowledge and skills in foster parents supervision

**2007**

Fourth Seminar – March 2007

Seminar duration: 4 days

Subject framework:

- Group dynamics
- Family dynamics
- Family dynamics in the foster family
- Sex and gender roles: theoretical concept and practical framework/ gender/ sex role in providing support to users
- Empathy and understanding of another's feelings
- How to deal with personal values/ the ethical aspect of supervisory activities
  
- Continue work on drafting the final thesis

Fifth Seminar – May 2007

Seminar duration: 1 day

Seminars for heads of social welfare centres:

“The Significance of Foster Parents Supervision for Improving the Quality of Foster Home Accommodation”

Sixth Seminar – June 2007

Seminar duration: 4 days

Subject framework:

- The child/ child in foster family
- The biological family of the child in foster care
- Conflicts: the general level and conflicts in the foster family – identifying ways to resolve/ reduce conflicts
  - conflicts related to the child in foster care
  - conflicts related to the biological family
  - conflicts related to the foster family

Seventh Seminar – October 2007

Seminar duration: 3 days

Subject framework:

- Dynamics of change. Changes to the organizational structure of the social welfare centre. The impact of the organizational structure on the possibility of paradigm change.
- How to discover difficulties? What are the consequences?
- Supervision and organizational structure

Eight Seminar – December 2007

Seminar duration: 1 day

Seminar for heads of social welfare centres

“How to support foster parents supervision? What are the required organizational changes?”

**2008**

Ninth Seminar – February 2008

Seminar duration: 2 days

Subject framework:

- How to end the supervisory process?
- What are the required organizational changes?
- How to evaluate the supervisory process?
  
- Consultations on writing the final thesis

Tenth Seminar – May 2008

Examinations and final thesis defence

Eleventh Seminar – June 2008

Closing conference and diploma awarding