



“Conscious Parent Academy –  
Replacement parents urgently needed!”  
(Program Erasmus+ 2020-1-PL01-KA204-  
082283)

# Foster Care:

## Working with children with special/different needs

27 February 2023

# Before we start, a little presentation of our institution...

- **Founded in 1983**, the Instituto de Apoio à Criança is a **Portuguese Non-Governmental Organization** whose mission is to defend and promote the rights of children.
- It is translated to “**Child Support Institute**”.
- It is headquartered in Lisbon.



For the Defense and Protection of  
Children's Rights

# Our Mission...

- IAC aims to contribute to the **Child's Development and the Defense and Promotion of their Rights**.
- Calls attention to the **problems of childhood in today's society**, and searches for new answers and ways to act regarding these problems, so most children may joyfully live the time of being a Child.
- Implements prevention and training programs that aim to prepare children for adult life, and helps to their social integration, and to develop their active participation in society.



# Intervention Services & Transversal Areas

*Actividade Lúdica / Play Activity*

*Humanização / Humanization*

*Polo de Coimbra /  
Coimbra Center*

*Projecto Rua /  
Street Kids Project*

*Serviço Jurídico /  
Legal Department*

*SOS-Criança / Child SOS*

*Conhecimento e Formação /  
Knowledge and Training*

*Cooperação Nacional e  
Internacional /  
National and International  
Cooperation*

*Marketing e Comunicação /  
Marketing and Communication*

**\*\* Our team belongs to this department.**

- It is composed of three psychologists and two teachers, and we are responsible for:
- Producing and disseminating technical and scientific studies/research.
- Managing IAC's external training and promoting internal training for IAC's workers.



# These are some of our activities...



“Escolas de (e a) Brincar” /  
Project (Play Activity)



Humanization of child health care services  
(Humanization)



Activities developed with children in school  
(Coimbra Center)



Intervention support  
van  
(Street Kids Project)

## Other services we provide...

### Child Support Helplines



#### Linha SOS Criança / SOS Child Helpline

- Service for children to expose their problems and to ask for help (telephone, e-mail and whatsapp)



#### Linha SOS Criança Desaparecida/ SOS Missing Child Helpline

- Missing Children Service.
- It works jointly with investigative and judicial entities (Amber alert).



#### Linha SOS Família-Adoção/ SOS Family-Adoption Helpline

- Counselling service for adoptive families and children, post adoption.
- Provides emotional and specialized support, to all, including professionals in this area.

### Social Office



#### That provides:

- Legal assistance
- Psychological service
- Social assistance

# Instituto de Apoio à Criança

“A child policy must be the work of an entire community, with people active participation and coordinated institutional work.”

**Dr. João dos Santos**

1913-1987

Psychoanalyst

Founder of the Modern Child Mental Health in Portugal

IAC's Founder



For the Defense and Protection of  
Children's Rights

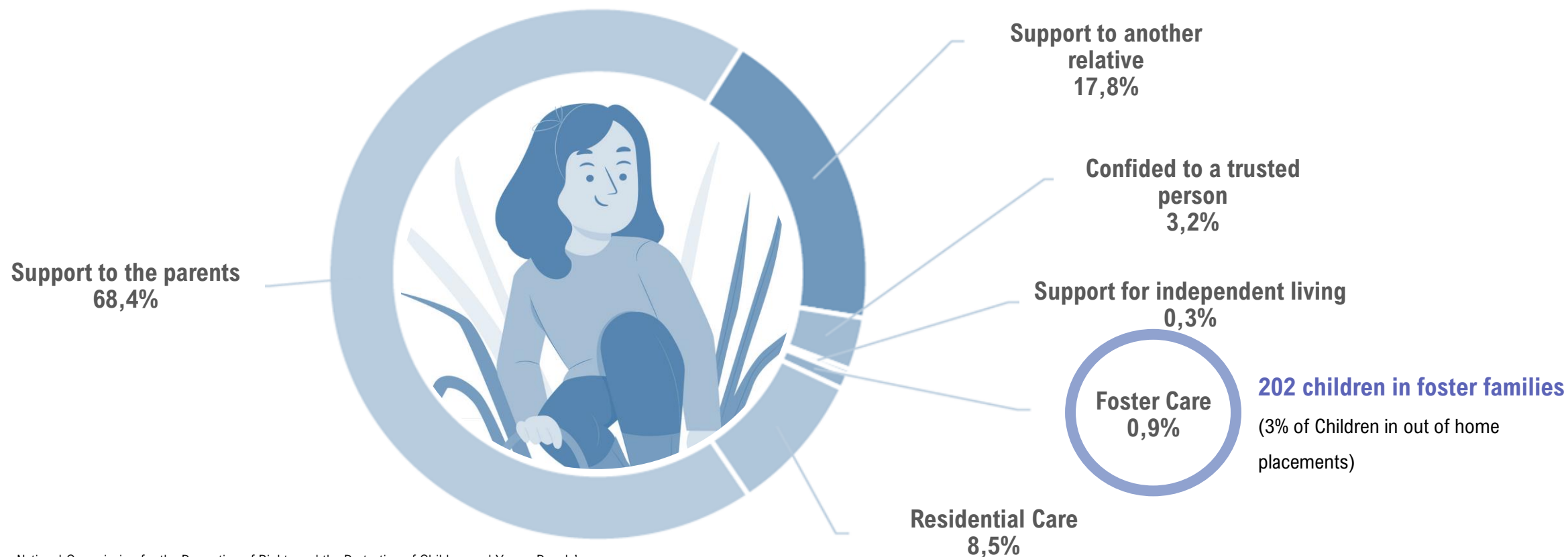


# Foster Care In Portugal



# The Promotion and Protection Measures in Portugal

69.727 Children with Promotion and Protection Process in 2021



# What situations lead to the process of out-of-home placement?

## General situations that lead to a process or a promotion/protection measure:

- Exposure to Domestic Violence.
- Child's neglect, lack of supervision, or monitoring.
- School absenteeism.
- Temporary absence of family support.

## Situations that lead to the foster care placement of a child:

- ☐ Child's neglect, lack of supervision, or monitoring (27%).
- ☐ Neglect regarding the child's health (11%).
- ☐ Sexual abuse (7%).



# Who are the children being fostered in Portugal?

Until what ages can children be fostered?



Children and youth **from 0 to 18 years old**.



In some situations, **until they are fully autonomous or over 21 years old**.



Foster Care of **children under the age of 6 is prioritized**.

How many children can be fostered in each home?



Each family can **foster up to two children**



When there are **siblings**, it is prioritized that they stay together in the same Foster Family.







# Foster Care:

The role and competencies of Foster Families and Caregivers.



# The role of Foster Families

**“A lot is expected from the foster families,  
perhaps more than from the birth parents in general population”**

(Slonsky & Berricks, 2001)

The children cared for, often have special needs and circumstances that require a great level a competencies and skills to care for.



Which is why foster parents need to be skilled, competent and well-trained in variety of domains

(Buehler et al., 2006; Pride, 1993)

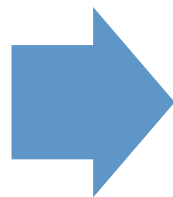


(Buehler et al., 2006; Pride, 1993)

# The Competencies of Foster Families

The competencies that the foster family  
has or acquires in the process, help  
promote...

Competencies  
in Foster Care



Success in  
Foster Care

The combination of **knowledge, interest and skills needed** to perform, accurately and successfully, the tasks implied and the role of foster family in the foster care.

- **Children whose needs are being met**, and their development is promoted and encouraged **within a safe, nurturing and secure family environment**.
- Actualization of the permanency plans and **avoidance of unneeded/unplanned changes of the childcare**.
- A **foster family capable of managing the challenges of fostering**, by providing care, without compromising their own well-being.





(Buehler et al., 2006; Pride, 1993)

# Key Competencies of Foster Families

Management and  
Promotion of children's  
and youth needs and  
well-being.

Management and  
Promotion of Children's  
and Youth relationships  
with others

Management of  
personal competencies  
and emotions as a  
foster family/caregiver.



# Foster Families Presentation and Experiences

We would like to invite you to talk about:

- ☐ Your experiences of foster care in your country.
- ☐ What qualities, capacities and competencies you find more important for foster care.





# A preview of the next days of the training and the science behind.



Thank you for your attention!

Obrigada pela vossa atenção!

Děkojame už jūsu dēmesī

Dziękuję za uwagę



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