

# Portugal - 2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

*This summary provides key highlights from the first Biennial report on the Child Guarantee implementation in Portugal. It is not exhaustive or evaluative.*

## Roll-out of key services

**Early childhood education and care:** Gradual extension of free access to ECEC for all children aged 0-3. 30% of the places allocated for ECEC are allocated to those receiving the *Child Guarantee Supplement* or family benefits.

**Education and school-based activities:** Development of the *Escola+ Plan* and the *Strategic School Sports Programme (2021-2025)*. The *School Social Assistance (ASE)* supports economically disadvantaged students and the *Priority Intervention Educational Territories (TEIP) Programme* focuses on improving education for vulnerable communities.

**Healthcare:** Benefits for children and youth facing special vulnerabilities. These include reduced payments for outpatient mental health care, and family contribution exemptions for inpatient services based on income, in line with the *National Programme for Child and Youth Health*.

**Healthy meal each school day:** The *School Distribution Scheme* provides guidelines for supplying school food, including the *School Meal Planning and Assessment System*. All school lunches are co-financed by the Ministry of Education, regardless of the student's socio-economic background.

**Adequate housing:** Structural reform to ensure universal access to decent housing. Programs like *1 Direito* focus on vulnerable populations, while the *Porta de Entrada* and *National Reserve Pool* provide urgent and temporary accommodation, especially for disaster victims and refugees.

**Alternative care:** Programmes aimed at limiting the use of residential care services and a Ministerial Order reforms reforming residential facilities.

**Support to vulnerable households:** The Child Guarantee was introduced in the 2022 State Budget to support families with children. It includes three key measures: a new social benefit, increased family benefits for low-income families, and the *Child Guarantee Supplement* (financial).

## Resources

- [Full Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee](#)
- [Portugal Child Guarantee National Action Plan – Eurochild's overview](#)
- [Eurochild Portugal Country Profile](#)

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Portugal's Child Guarantee operates through four key levels: the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, the National Coordinator, local Centres and the Autonomous Regions. The NAP integrates pre-existing measures, new initiatives and future projects. Adjustments to the indicators to the monitoring framework, suggested by sectoral areas, aim for a rigorous, sustainable, and long-term evaluation of poverty, social exclusion, and access to essential services, ensuring effective implementation until 2030.

## Funding to implement the Child Guarantee

The Child Guarantee is supported by national and EU funding, including the *Recovery and Resilience Plan*. The report provides an overview of the amount of budget used for each service.

## Target groups

The target groups have been identified in the National Action Plan and [Eurochild's overview](#).

## Lessons learnt and further development

A key change is the inclusion of *Youth, Sports, and Culture representatives* in the Child Guarantee Technical Monitoring Committee to enhance collaboration in these areas. The plan's regional and local implementation through *Child Guarantee Local Centres* has been valuable in aligning central and local policies. However, challenges persist, particularly in gathering detailed data on children in poverty, especially migrant children. Efforts to improve participation of children and families are underway, alongside the establishment of an *Intersectoral Advisory Board* to guide policy development.

## Relevant trends

- Between 2021 and 2022, the AROPE rate for children and young people decreased from 22.9% to 20.7%.
- The proportion of children under 3 in early childhood education and care increased to 45.9% in 2022.
- The early school leaving rate decreased from 14% in 2016 to 6.5% in 2022 but increased to 8% in 2023.
- The *School Social Assistance* covered 23% of students in 2021/2022, co-financing 100% or 50% of meals for nearly 360,000 students.
- The number of children in *generalist residential care* decreased by 13% between 2019 and 2022, reaching 5,386 in 2022.