

## ALMA'S FEEDBACK ON ECG

### 3.1. Early childhood care and education

#### 3.1.1. Pre-school care (for children 1-4 years old)

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"Following the development of the pedagogical framework and the psychometric tools for infant and toddler development screening, the two universities will pilot the program in at least 90 infant, nursery and childcare centres. The implementation will be linked to the training of early childhood educators in the new pedagogical framework and to psycho-educational interventions, including but not limited to coaching educators on early screening and behavioural practices. Upon completion of the pilot implementation of the program, the relevant pedagogical material that will be produced, as well as the psychometric tools for infant and toddler development screening will be evaluated and then distributed to at least 2,700 infant, nursery and childcare centres, in order to follow the nationwide implementation of the program, as provided for by the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee."

**Comment 1 :** *For the past two years, ALMA has been piloting a developmental difficulties screening program in daycare centers in Palaio Faliro. It also provides training for early childhood educators. This program is funded by our own organization's resources. Since we have already implemented this program, we are available to share our experience, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses.*

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"Vouchers are granted on the basis of a point system for which three main eligibility criteria are taken into account: annual taxable family income, employment status and employment relationship, and marital status. The system favors children in a situation of poverty and social exclusion. Unlike the point system applied for access to municipal nurseries, this one is applied to national level with the same criteria and conditions."

**Comment 2 :** *From our experience, the distribution of vouchers does not support the average middle-class family. If both parents are employed, they are automatically excluded from the eligibility criteria for receiving a voucher. Perhaps the voucher should function as a supplement to the family income.*

#### 3.1.3. Early Intervention (for children 0-6 years old)

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"The aim of the program is to provide vouchers to at least 2,500 children to receive Early Intervention services from specially trained providers. The total budget of the program amounts to €35,062,820 including VAT and will be financed from the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund."

**Comment 3 :** *There is no treatment protocol for early intervention to take place. A strict review must be conducted regarding the criteria for which organization is responsible for early intervention. These criteria/requirements should be made publicly available.*

### **3.2. Education and school activities**

#### **3.2.1. Education**

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"In addition, the "Specialized Support Program for Students with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs" concerns the staffing of school units with Special Assistants and Special Education Personnel in order to support the education of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs."

**Comment 4 :** *It is important to emphasize that parallel support for students with disabilities or special educational needs should be lifelong. It is crucial to understand that the need for parallel support does not end in secondary education. It is recommended that parallel support continues into higher education as well.*

### **3.4. Health care**

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"Mobile Primary Health Care Units: Two mobile units will operate in Attica and Central Macedonia, offering support to unaccompanied children. Two mobile units will provide two mobile health care centers and two mobile homes. The JMD draft has been submitted for signature by the Minister of Health. In the mental health sector, there are child and adolescent support structures, as reflected in section 8.2 of the NAP, aimed at ensuring access to mental health services for children living in precarious conditions, children with disabilities, and children living in remote and/or inaccessible areas."

**Comment 5 :** *It is important to have a mobile mental health unit that provides diagnosis, support, and psychoeducation for parents. This service could also operate through community centers.*

### **3.6.3. De-institutionalization**

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"The training of prospective parent sponsors began in September 2024. The goal of the program is to connect 100 children with disabilities who reside in institutions with professional foster parents by the end of 2025. The total budget of the program is

4,173,928 euros including VAT and will be financed from the resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund.”

**Comment 6 :** *For the training of prospective professional parents, continuous education, support, and supervision are recommended. This training, support, and supervision should be provided lifelong, as an ongoing necessity to assist professional parents in their new role. It is also suggested that topics related to disability and autism be included in the training curriculum.*

## **7.1. Good practices**

### **Page 40**

Funding for accessibility infrastructure for people with disabilities in school buildings (construction of ramps and sanitary facilities for access and service of people with disabilities in school units)<sup>18</sup> : Within the framework of the Ministry of Interior's Funding Programs, municipalities in the country are invited to submit a proposal for funding for the construction or prefabrication and installation of access ramps for people with disabilities, as well as for the construction of sanitary facilities for the service of people with disabilities, in school units under their territorial jurisdiction.

**Comment 7 :** *We must point out that many schools are not accessible to various forms of disabilities. Many schools lack elevators, and in some cases, existing ones are not functional. Schools should also be accessible to students with sensory difficulties.*

Psychosocial Intervention Program for Adolescents and Youth of the "Ploes" organization EPSYME<sup>24</sup> : It is addressed to adolescents and young people, without serious psychiatric or developmental disorders, who face psychosocial difficulties, as well as their families. It includes: Adolescent and Youth Day Centre, Adolescent Boys' Shelter, Adolescent Girls' Shelter and Sheltered Apartments.

**Comment 8 :** *We have a question regarding why there is a specific reference to PLOES. ALMA falls under the Ministry of Health and provides services such as early intervention, respite care, and other pilot initiatives in daycare centers.*