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# **Croatia: Positive communication and engaged parenting - prevention of institutionalization of children with disabilities**



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# Parent's right to information

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- Health Care Act
- Law on the Protection of Patients' Rights
- Medical Practice Act
- Code of Medical Ethics and Deontology



# Enhancing the communication skills of healthcare providers

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## **STATUS**

- **Medical facts**
- **Accurate information**
- **Incomplete information**
- **Inappropriate way of communication**
- **Inappropriate place and time**
- **Parents under stress, often with a sense of guilt**

## **GOAL**

- **Medical facts**
- **Accurate information**
- **More complete information**
- **Communication in an understandable manner for parent**
- **In a separate room, and not in the hallway**
- **Engaged parent**



## Positive communication

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- Ministry of Health - Project "**Kindness is the beginning of each treatment**" - Communication skills training for health care professionals
- UNICEF in cooperation with MoH delivered trainings ***How to tell unwanted news?*** - education on effective communication between health professionals and parents of children with disabilities, including health care workers in ALL maternity hospitals at the state and local level
- Faculty of Medicine introduced academic course: Basic Medical Skills with university textbook: "How to tell unwanted news?,"



## Positive communication

# "How to tell unwanted news in a good way?"

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- First contact is the most important
- Positive approach and support to parents
- Appropriate and carefully chosen words without highly technical terms
- Give as much information as possible about positive sides of the child's development
- Provide information on support public services and social rights
- Provide information on nongovernmental organisations in the area



## Engaged Parent

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- **'Creating' an engaged parent takes involvement of a multidisciplinary professional team:** paediatrician, physiatrist, physiotherapist, rehabilitator, social worker, psychologist and other professionals as needed
- **Parental involvement is extremely important in process of early intervention**

# Engaging parents in process of early intervention





# Engaged Parent – Best Practice Model

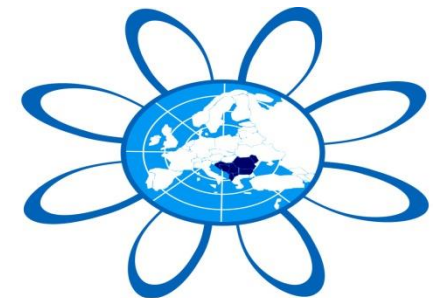
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**Centre for rehabilitation - Down Syndrom Centre Pula**



EUROPEAN  
DOWN SYNDROME  
ASSOCIATION



**SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE  
HEALTH NETWORK**





# Engaged Parent Basic programme principles

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Programme is implemented in line with the European Down Syndrom Associatiaon guidelines:

- aiming at inclusion and prevention of institutionalisation of children with Down Syndrom
- multidisciplinary approach
- individual plans prepared for each child, with active involvement of parents
- in line with needs and chronological age of a child
- implemented throughout a year

**There is always a way to communicate!**



***If not by words,  
then by signs.***



## Conclusions:

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### **Prevention of institutionalisation of children with disabilities lies in:**

- Positive attitudes and communication of professionals
- Supporting engaged parenting
- Developing public community services for parents and families
- Enhancing the role of parental associations
- Destigmatisation and increased public awareness on challenges, needs and rights of children with disabilities

Thank you!

