Employing evidence-based approaches in programmes for children and families in Europe

European Platform for Investing in Children

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Outline

• General Introduction

• Introducing EPIC

• ‘Practices that work’ and evaluation framework

• Examples of practices

• Stakeholder engagement with EPIC
Why is evidence-based policymaking important?

RAND's mission is both simple and incredibly complex:

• We exist to help policymakers make decisions that are based on the best available information.
• Evidence allows decision makers and stakeholders to make better judgements, which often lead to improved performance and outcomes.

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What constitutes an evidence-based practice in social policy?

• Less consensus than in medicine ("evidence" is difficult to define and human interactions are complicated), thus inclusiveness about acceptable evidence is needed

• EBP definitions share elements of programme evaluation:
  – EBP is designed to maximize likelihood that impacts are due to programme itself
  – EBP has sufficient sample size
  – EBP shows effects that are statistically and practically significant
  – EBP utilises outcome measures that make sense
European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC)

• Sponsored by European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL);
• Focused on child and family practices and programmes, within EC 2013 Recommendation on ‘Investing in children - breaking the cycle of disadvantage’
• The go-to platform for policy makers and practitioners
• Identifies, selects, assesses, presents and disseminates practices that work
• EPIC aims to:
  – improve exchange of information
  – share best practices
  – foster cooperation and mutual learning
Key policy objectives of EPIC

1. Support parents’ participation in the labour market
2. Invest in early childhood education and care
3. Provide for adequate living standards through a combination of benefits
4. Support children’s right to participate in play, culture and decisionmaking
5. Enhance family support and the quality of alternative care settings
The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) is an evidence-based online platform that provides information about policies that can help children and their families face the challenges that exist in the current economic climate in Europe.
EPIC incorporates standard features of platforms

• Provides information via a website
• Uses pre-established topic definition and evidence framework
• Employs researchers in topic areas as reviewers
  – RAND Europe staff execute searches and data extractions
  – Expert panelists from across EU serve as peer reviewers
• Updates information regularly
• Targets policymakers, practitioners and academics

But also tailors to needs of EU-28....
How do we identify practices that work?

Practices are identified through a combination of:

- Literature review
- Suggestions from our Sounding Board members, expert panel, stakeholders and Member States experts
- Practices submitted via website

- If documented evaluations are available, they will be subjected to the evaluation framework
- Further review by external experts
- If meeting criteria, they are included as evidence-based practices
EPIC: A three-pronged approach to sharing practices

1. Practice implemented in EU Member State? (Yes/No)
   - No: Not included in EPIC
   - Yes: Within scope of EPIC?
     - Yes: User registry practice
       - No: Has the practice been devised in the past 3 years to increase social capital, stimulate a sense of solidarity and help build communities?
         - No: Does the practice have its activities, intended outcomes and aims clearly stated, and how they are connected, and its assumptions clearly defined?
           - Yes: Social innovation repository practice
         - Yes: Evidence-based practices
       - Yes: Does the evidence meet the EPIC inclusion criteria?
         - Yes: Evidence-based practices
         - No: Has the practice been evaluated?
           - No: User registry practice
           - Yes: Evidence-based practices
Practices that work

The ‘Practices that work’ section features three collections of practices being used throughout the European Union:

- The collection of Evidence-Based Practices aims to share emerging, promising and best practices for children and families which are being implemented across the EU.
- The Social Innovation Repository features practices that are innovative and have a clear theory of change, but as they have been developed in the past 5 years may not yet have sufficient evidence of their effectiveness.
- The User Registry provides an overview of practices being implemented across Europe, which are shared in the spirit of collaboration.

These three registries are designed to complement each other and to provide a comprehensive picture of the most effective practices being used throughout the European Union.

Users can search for practices by country, 2013 Recommendation Pillar, age group, target group, and type of implementing organisation.

Submit a practice

EPIC is an open platform: innovative child-related practices can be submitted on the website via an online form, and stakeholders and users can send an email for further information.
Evaluation framework: criteria designed with three aims in mind

1. To provide a reference framework for evaluating child and family practice
2. To adhere to scientific standards of transparency and replicability
3. To provide an objective method of distinguishing between practices with differing levels of evidence and benefits
The evidence levels are tiered

Evidence of effectiveness

Transferability

Sustainability
The evidence levels are tiered

- Evidence of effectiveness
- Transferability
- Sustainability
- Emergent practice
The evidence levels are tiered
The evidence levels are tiered
‘Smokefree Class Competition’: an example of a Promising Practice

Smokefree Class Competition

Evidence level:

- Best Practice
- Promising Practice
- Emergent Practice

Evidence of effectiveness:

-?
-0
++

Transferability:

-?
-0
++

Enduring impact:

-?
-0
+

Project overview
Practice category
Countries that have implemented practice
Age groups
Target groups
Years in operation
Scope of practice
Type of organisation implementing practice
Rationale of practice
Evidence of effectiveness
Transferability
Practice Materials
Cost information
Enduring impact
Evaluation details
Issue to consider
Available resources
Bibliography
The Family-Friendly Workplace Programme: a practice from the Social Innovation Repository

The Family-Friendly Workplace Programme
Why engage with EBP Platforms?

**Gaining momentum and scale**
The sharing of new and untested practices, through the User Registry and the Social Innovation Repository, can help new ideas to gain momentum and scale.

**Reaping the low hanging fruit**
If a practice is known to be effective, sharing that information can help improve outcomes for a wider population.

**Recognition**
EBP platforms can help your practice gain recognition, and in some cases, help to ensure continued funding.

**Responsible decision-making**
EBPs provide confidence that practices are effective.
The platform is only as good as its users’ input

- ‘Practices that work’ sections depend on input from stakeholders – currently 74 EBP, 16 SIRP and 190 UPR
- Stakeholders can help EPIC gain exposure to experts, policymakers and practitioners
- We encourage you to submit practices to the ‘Practices that Work Section’, to interact with EPIC and to suggest improvements
- We solicit feedback on how to improve the reach and leverage of the platform
Further options for involvement

- Notifying us of (new) reports, events and further news items on the EPIC website
- Submission of practices
- Feel free to interact with EPIC and to suggest improvements and feedback!

http://europa.eu/epic

Feel free to contact us at epic@rand.org

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